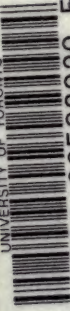


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THROUGH  
GERMAN EYES

BY

E. A. SONNENSCHN

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## THROUGH GERMAN EYES

AFTER nearly five months of war, and at the season of the great festival of peace and goodwill towards men, it should be possible to survey the European situation in the spirit of the great Roman historian, 'sine ira et studio.' The present writer has friends and relatives in Germany and Austria, and he would fain say nothing here which he could not say to them, face to face. But this attitude does not involve the abatement of one jot or tittle of the truth. On the contrary, truth is the great reconciler of differences—the common ground on which we and our enemies have to take our stand. It is too soon to attempt a final verdict on the great questions which will come up for adjudication before the bar of history. But it is even now possible to cultivate the spirit of common sense, and to associate with it that nobler 'sensus communis'—the bond of mankind—of which a Roman satirist speaks as rarely found where it is most wanted.

It is possible, indeed, that all reasoning in time of war is mere self-illusion. And the present writer recognizes that in attempting to demolish certain phantoms of the mind, which seem to him to stand in the way of the light—'idols of the tribe, the cave, the market-place, and the theatre'—he may be found to be harbouring idols of his own. If so, they too will come within the general scope of this paper, as 'idols of war'.



## THE CAUSES OF THE WAR.

To the attentive student of the Blue Book, the Yellow Book, and the Orange Book, one conclusion seems to emerge beyond the possibility of reasonable doubt, and it is not weakened by anything that is advanced in the German White Book or by any of the known facts of the situation. None of the Entente Powers desired war at the present time. If Great Britain had desired war, Sir Edward Grey would not have laboured day and night to secure a peaceful settlement of the Serbian dispute. If Russia had desired war, she would not have advised Serbia to accept all but the most humiliating of the Austrian demands. That France was responsible for the outbreak of war not even her enemies have asserted. Patent facts point in the same direction. Not one of the Entente Powers was prepared for an offensive war.

On the other hand there is much evidence to show that peace was one of the great assets of Germany, as of Great Britain, and that the German nation as a whole and even the German Government was animated by a fundamental desire for peace. We seem, then, to be presented with the spectacle of two great groups of Powers desiring peace but actually at war. —How is that possible ?

The answer is that behind this desire for peace on both sides there lay certain claims (call them ambitions, if you like) which neither side was willing to relinquish and neither to allow as justified in the other.

On our side Great Britain claimed the continuance of her predominance at sea, as necessary to her safety as an island Power and to the existence of an empire which is bound together by the ocean. France claimed some revision of the Treaty of Frankfurt,

whereby an improved status should be secured for the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine—either some measure of self-government within the German Empire or reunion with France.<sup>1</sup> This claim of justice for Alsace-Lorraine must be carefully distinguished from the cry for *revanche*, which no doubt made itself heard in the years that immediately followed 1871.<sup>2</sup> Russia claimed the position of protector of the Balkan States, and all that it involved.

On the other side, Germany claimed the right to expansion and to a more favourable 'place in the sun', and all that it implied. }

It was these rival claims which were never reconciled, and so led to war. Whether they were irreconcilable without an appeal to force we shall now never know for certain. But it is clear that they could not have been reconciled without concessions on both sides. The Germans say that they had been labouring for years for an understanding with Great Britain. But to us Britons it seems that Germany, while desiring peace, was not willing to pay the price of peace. She would not listen to any proposal for the reconsideration of the Treaty of Frankfurt; she steadfastly refused to admit any right of Russia to intervene in the Serbian dispute; she would not recognize the need of Great Britain for a superior fleet. That we on our side have done all that we could to meet the views of Germany I do not assert. But we at any rate gave her a free hand in the matter of the Bagdad railway. Moreover Germany seems to us to have

<sup>1</sup> See a lecture by M. Jacques Preiss, delivered in Paris on Feb. 17, 1913, and quoted in *The German Enigma* by M. Georges Bourdon (Appendix, English translation, pp. 353-7).

<sup>2</sup> M. Bourdon denies that the desire for revenge has been an active force in France during recent years.

exaggerated the urgency of her need of expansion. The population of Germany is considerably less per square mile than that of Great Britain, and not half that of Belgium.<sup>1</sup> German emigration has fallen to a very low point, because the German artisan can now find employment and good wages at home. Moreover, Germany already has considerable colonial possessions, sufficient for her immediate needs.

‘ENGLAND IS THE CHIEF CULPRIT.’

So says Professor Wundt of Leipzig,<sup>2</sup> and so say most Germans. Indeed this belief, that this country is responsible for having set on foot a plot to ring Germany round with enemies, is the explanation of the special bitterness now felt in Germany against us. Professor Wundt speaks of ‘the English programme for the encircling (*Einkreisung*) of Germany’: ‘For England there is no excuse. It was England that drew up the devilish plan for the destruction of Germany. It was England that set going the monstrous triple alliance (*Dreiverband*) of two lands of ancient European culture with barbaric Russia.’ ‘As the Lord liveth,’ cried Mr. Lloyd George in the City Temple (Nov. 10), ‘we had entered into no conspiracy against Germany.’ The Germans will not believe that. But it is possible to appeal to obvious facts of chronology. The Dual Alliance of France and Russia came into being in the early

<sup>1</sup> The figures given in *Whitaker's Almanack* for 1914 are :—

German Empire . . .	311	per square mile.
Great Britain . . .	374	„ „ „
Belgium . . . . .	658	„ „ „

These figures are, no doubt, not exact for various reasons; but they roughly represent the facts

<sup>2</sup> *Internationale Monatsschrift*, Oct. 15, 1914, pp. 122, 126. ‘England ist und bleibt der Hauptschuldige.’



nineties (say 1890-4): the *entente* with France was not formed till 1904, and that with Russia not till 1907. In what sense was Great Britain responsible for the actions of France and Russia in 1890-4? Does Professor Wundt mean to say that the alliance of France and Russia was harmless until it was converted into a Triple Entente? If he meant that, he should have said so and given some proof.

\* — The real fact is that Germany by her own acts has ringed herself around with enemies. By the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine contrary to the wishes of the inhabitants she established an enemy on her west as early as 1871; France has never ceased to demand some redress of what she regards as a legitimate grievance. By abandoning the policy of Bismarck and the Emperor William I, in or about the year 1890, she drove Russia, contrary to the predilections of the Czar, Alexander III, into the arms of republican France. And finally by her ship-building policy, obviously directed against Great Britain, and the frank menaces of many of her public men during and since the Boer War, she drove this country into the arms of France and Russia. That is how the *Einkreisung* came about. That Germany in these circumstances should feel bitter and resentful is only natural, especially during the last three years; for the Moroccan incident of 1911 ended in a profound disappointment to the German nation at large; and the outcome of the Balkan War of 1912 was a blow to German and Austrian ambitions in the east. Moreover the Italian alliance, on which Prince von Bülow set such high hopes,<sup>1</sup> has since then proved a broken reed. But to hold Great Britain responsible for all these things is plainly contrary to history.

<sup>1</sup> *Imperial Germany*, English translation, pp. 52, 54.

Professor Adolf Deissmann, indeed, goes so far as to say that France and Russia were merely puppets (*Puppen*) in the hands of Great Britain, on whom the peace of the world hung.<sup>1</sup> If he means that the whole course of European history would have been different, had Great Britain joined the Triple Alliance instead of forming an *entente* with France in 1904, he is no doubt right. But if he is to be interpreted in the sense of the Second German White Paper, as suggesting that this country might have induced or compelled France not to adhere to the terms of her alliance with Russia in July 1914, he is attributing to Great Britain more power than she possessed. The action of France was determined by the ultimatum sent by Germany on July 31. Our action depended on that of France, not vice versa. Had Germany confined herself to a strictly defensive attitude towards France, there would have been no violation of Belgian neutrality, and everything would have been different.

#### THE NEUTRALITY OF BELGIUM.

Professor Deissmann also affirms his conviction that the violation of the neutrality of Belgium by Germany was only a 'pretext' (*Vorwand*) on our part.<sup>3</sup> 'England does not fight for the *ius gentium*.' The rights of smaller nations appeal to the conscience of this country more strongly than Professor Deissmann thinks. But it would be untrue to assert that our obligation to

<sup>1</sup> *Internationale Monatsschrift*, Oct. 15, 1914, p. 118.

<sup>2</sup> General von Bernhardt, however, admits that Great Britain probably acted wisely from her own point of view in joining the group hostile to Germany (*Our Future—a Word of Warning to the German Nation*, English translation by Mr. Ellis Barker, entitled *Britain as Germany's Vassal*, p. 143).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

Belgium was the sole cause which brought Great Britain into the field. This we are bound to recognize explicitly. It was not the interest of this country to allow the mouth of the Scheldt to fall under the control of any of the great Powers. To prevent that was, no doubt, part of Lord Palmerston's policy in 1831, when Great Britain stood sponsor to the new-born Belgium. Mr. Gladstone was prepared to fight, if necessary, for Belgian neutrality in 1870. And Sir Edward Grey's action in 1914 was part and parcel of the same policy. But it is quite unfair to suggest that the treaty obligation which we had incurred was of no account in our eyes. Honour and self-interest are happily not always inconsistent with one another.<sup>1</sup> Moreover we had to consider not only our treaty obligation to Belgium, but also our obligation of honour to France.

During the last few weeks a new charge has been brought against this country. It is said that certain documents discovered by the Germans in Brussels prove the existence in 1906 of an understanding between Great Britain and Belgium as to concerted military operations in case of a violation of Belgian neutrality by Germany. And it is argued that this agreement amounted to a violation of the neutrality of Belgium on the part of this country and of Belgium herself. Whether this interpretation can be put upon it is a question of international law, and I am content, at present, to quote the opinion of an Austrian authority, Professor Alexander Löffler, a member of the Faculty of Law in Vienna. A politician, he says, would be justified in assuming that a one-sided agreement of this kind implies that Great Britain would not have taken similar steps in case of a breach of Belgian neutrality by France. But as a scientific lawyer he feels

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Why we are at War*, p. 122.

bound to give the verdict '*Non liquet* ; the conclusive proof is lacking '.<sup>1</sup> See also Sir E. Grey's statement.<sup>2</sup>

### WHAT NEUTRALITY MEANS.

'The basic condition of neutrality is that a neutral state gives no aid to either combatant.'<sup>3</sup> If Belgium had allowed Germany to use Belgian territory as a means of attacking France, she would have lent her aid to Germany and struck a blow at France. Everything depends on the purpose for which a right of way is used. It was Belgium's duty to France as well as her right not to treat France as though she were an enemy. 'A neutral state is entitled to oppose the violation of its territory by all means in its power.'<sup>4</sup> 'The fact of a neutral power resisting, even by force, attempts to violate its neutrality cannot be regarded as a hostile act.'<sup>5</sup> That Germany was committing a wrong in her action against Belgium was avowed with cynical frankness by the German Chancellor; and the importance of this admission is not weakened by subsequent attempts to argue that if the Chancellor had known about the agreement referred to above (p. 9), the admission need never have been made.

### THE SPECIAL TREATY OF 1870.

It has been argued that as the special treaty signed at Berlin on August 8 and at Paris on August 11, 1870, was binding only during the continuance of the war of 1870 and for twelve months after the ratification of any treaty of peace concluded between the parties, there was no

<sup>1</sup> *Neue Freie Presse*, Nov. 14, 1914.

<sup>2</sup> *The Times*, Dec. 7, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> *Kriegsgebrauch* (1902), translated by Ellis Barker in *Britain as Germany's Vassal*, p. 250.

<sup>4</sup> *Kriegsgebrauch*, *ibid.*, p. 252.

<sup>5</sup> Hague Conference (1907), Article 10.



treaty obligation subsisting in 1914 to protect Belgian neutrality. But this argument ignores the fact that the treaty of 1870 also provided that on the expiration of that term 'the independence and neutrality of Belgium will, as far as the high contracting parties are respectively concerned, continue to rest as heretofore on the 1st article of the Quintuple Treaty of the 19th of April, 1839'.

### THE SERAJEVO MURDERS.

It has always been assumed that the crime of Serajevo was the starting-point of the European conflagration of 1914. But in the light of recent revelations it seems that it was little more than a pretext on the part of Austria. On December 5, in the Italian Chamber of Deputies, the ex-Premier, Signor Giolitti, produced a telegram dated August 9, 1913, in which he was informed by the then Foreign Minister that Austria was contemplating aggression against Serbia at that time, and that she had informed Italy and Germany of the fact, at the same time representing her action as defensive, in order to secure the support of those countries under the terms of the Triple Alliance.<sup>1</sup> Italy refused on the ground that the contemplated action was aggressive, not defensive, and that therefore no *casus foederis* could arise. The right of Italy to an attitude of neutrality in any such war was completely vindicated; and she has maintained that attitude on the same grounds during the war of 1914. Apparently Germany also discountenanced the Austrian scheme of 1913; at any rate it fell to the ground. But the fact that there was such a scheme throws an entirely new light on the Serajevo assassinations. We knew before

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, Dec. 7 and 11, 1914.

that Austria had demanded 'Sentence first, trial afterwards', like the Queen in Alice's Adventures. But we did not know that Austria had proposed to punish Serbia before the crime of Serajevo had been committed. We now see the projected action of 1913 as a continuation of the policy adopted towards Bosnia in 1908.

### THE DOCTRINE OF DEFENSIVE AGGRESSION.

For half a century Germany has claimed the right of taking the initiative against a prospective enemy. It was claimed in 1870. It is claimed now. Yet it strikes Englishmen as something novel and perilous. Can a nation ever be sure that a prospective enemy will prove an actual enemy? War may always be averted.<sup>1</sup> This is not the usual German view, however. Herr Maximilian Harden stated the doctrine of aggression as a means of defence in his conversation with M. Bourdon in 1912:<sup>2</sup> 'Suppose that I have a neighbour who never stops plotting schemes of vengeance against me . . . my elementary right of defence and precaution is to say in my turn, "If you want to fight, it shall be when I choose".' Similarly Germany defends her violation of Belgian neutrality by alleging that she was merely forestalling the prospective violation of the same territory by France. And the *Kölnische Zeitung* declared recently that Germany 'waited as long as honour allowed, but was not so stupid as to wait until everything was ready on the other side'.<sup>3</sup> If Great Britain had adopted this principle, who doubts that we might have secured some military advantage in the present war? But our diplomacy was patient, preferring to exhaust every hope of peace before an appeal to force was made.

<sup>1</sup> Prince von Bülow says the same, *Imperial Germany*, p. 92.

<sup>2</sup> *The German Enigma*, p. 179 f.      <sup>3</sup> Quoted in *The Times*, Dec. 8, p. 6.

## THE PSYCHOLOGICAL MOMENT.

In the light of the doctrine just discussed the outbreak of war last August becomes quite intelligible. Germany and Austria were of opinion that the psychological moment for defensive aggression had come, and acted accordingly. They do not hold themselves responsible, because their aggression was defensive according to their ideas of defence. That this was the real situation has been gradually revealed by a chain of evidence. First we had the British White Paper, then Sir Maurice de Bunsen's proof that it was Germany that banged the door on peace at the eleventh hour; then came the French Yellow Book, which showed, among other things, the preparations of Germany in co-operation with Austria; and finally comes Signor Giolitti's revelation as to the projected aggression of 1913.

All this is not inconsistent with a fundamental desire for peace on the part of Germany (p. 4). Germany desired peace, but she saw herself surrounded by prospective enemies, and she did not hesitate to forestall their attack.

*Haec, unde vitam sumeret inscia,  
Pacem duello miscuit.*

## WARUM SIND WIR SO VERHASST ?

This question has been asked by many Germans. It is true that Germany has at the present time no sincere friend in the world, except Austria and perhaps Turkey. 'The friend of none! A sad saying, but very significant,' says Professor Georg Steinhäuser of Kassel. He finds the cause partly in the exterior qualities of Germans, partly in the traditions of the past.<sup>1</sup> But is it a fact that there was

<sup>1</sup> *Deutsche Rundschau*, Dec. 1909 and Jan. 1910.

any active hatred of Germany in other lands prior to this war ? Germany was admired, courted, envied for some of her achievements. But I have never observed that there was any malice in the British envy. We were always told that we must wake up and emulate German enterprise and German industry in manufactures and trade, or we should be outstripped in the race. But we did not even put up a tariff against German goods. We knew that Germany was our best customer. As for any thought of drawing the sword to destroy a commercial rival, no one who knows this country believes that it was ever entertained. Yet to Germans without number this figment of the imagination is an article of faith. It is unnecessary to quote names ; the charge is writ large in the manifesto addressed to the Evangelical Christians abroad (signed by thirty eminent men, including Professors Eucken, Harnack, and Wundt), and the declaration by professors and men of science entitled ' European War '.

The Triple Alliance, we are told, was a strictly defensive league, the Triple Entente essentially aggressive.<sup>1</sup> What is the evidence for this assertion ? How does it look now in the light of accomplished facts ? King Edward VII is known in this country as ' Edward the Peace-maker ' ; to the Germans his whole policy seems to be an act of aggression against them.

#### THE MIDDLE-AGED BURGLAR THEORY.

Professor von Treitschke held a different view of the position of Great Britain. On the whole it seems less out of touch with reality ; for it represents this country as contented with what she has got, and pacifically minded. To von Treitschke Great Britain seemed like a middle-aged burglar who desired to retire from business, and

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Adolf Wagner of Berlin (*The German Enigma*, p. 79).



therefore proposed that burglary should cease. Germany, on the other hand, was a young and enterprising burglar, just starting on a promising career. So long as Great Britain, the great robber state, retained her booty—one-fifth of the habitable globe—what right had she to expect peace from the nations? <sup>1</sup> Her empire was decadent, moribund; and Germany had not only the power but also the right and the duty to wrest her empire from her.<sup>2</sup> For right is a question of might. At the bottom of this theory one must recognize a sense of outraged justice.<sup>3</sup> And if one is asked to justify Great Britain's having painted red one-fifth of the habitable globe, frankly one cannot. Nor can one justify the fact that *A* earns five times as much as *B*, but not one-tenth of the income of *C*. In this workaday world we have to be content with a rough kind of justice, and to acknowledge accomplished facts. We must 'live and let live'.

It should be borne in mind, however, that though we commonly speak of 'our colonies', they are not strictly *ours*. The relation is not one of ownership in the sense in which that term is understood in Germany. Our fellow countrymen have settled in distant parts of the earth, and the land which they occupy is *theirs*. We trade with them; we support them in various ways and are supported by them. But we do not take tribute from them. The whole relation is something of a mystery, which the Germans have hitherto completely failed to grasp. It is highly complex, highly unorganized. Perhaps

<sup>1</sup> See the late Professor Cramb's *Germany and England*, p. 14, and cf. General von Bernhardt in *Our Future*, &c., p. 207. The theory is also well stated by Professor Usher in *Pan-germanism*, pp. 247, 248.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. von Bernhardt, quoted in *Germany and England*, p. 65.

<sup>3</sup> For the same point of view at the present day see the French Yellow Book, p. 2: 'France with her forty million souls has not the right to rival Germany in this way.' Cf. pp. 3, 4, 19.

it will not remain so much longer. But if a change is to be made, it will assuredly not be in the direction of ownership. Nor will it be in the direction of separation, if the hopes awakened during this war are realized. I am speaking, of course, of the great self-governing colonies, such as Canada.

Von Treitschke was, of course, writing of a period long prior to that of the Triple Entente. His theory is, therefore, not necessarily inconsistent with the theory of British aggression referred to above (p. 6 f.). Yet it must be noted that, according to von Treitschke, Great Britain has been Germany's 'one and only enemy' for three or four decades at least, without knowing it. Her mere existence was an aggression; the British Empire was inconsistent with Germany's right to expansion. The middle-aged and sated burglar might, then, at least plead that his subsequent development into an aggressive foe was not without provocation, and that it was indeed a measure of self-defence.

#### GERMAN 'WISSENSCHAFT'.

No one admires more sincerely than I do the achievements of German science in the fields of which I have cognizance; yet I sometimes wonder whether the Germans are not tempted to trust too implicitly in their power of knowing, especially their power of forecasting the future in the domain of international relations. For, as Lord Beaconsfield said, it is the unexpected that happens. There is, after all, something to be said for the rooted distrust of the Britisher for what he calls 'theory'. The whole justification of the German policy of defensive aggression is based on the assumption that it is possible to know the intentions and future actions of other nations. The flimsiness of this kind of knowledge is illustrated by many passages in General von Bernhardi's books. For

instance, 'England is interested in destroying Germany's competition ;' <sup>1</sup> from this he infers that England does actually intend to destroy it. Again, 'All these circumstances make it obviously desirable for Great Britain that a war should break out as soon as possible ;' hence he 'cannot help concluding that England would like to bring about a war between Russia and Austria by means of the Balkan trouble, in the hope that such a war might lead to a general European war'.<sup>2</sup> Sir Edward Grey was not of that opinion ; but General von Bernhardi knew where the true interests of England lay. It must in fairness be added that the next page contains an important admission : 'Of course one cannot prove whether and how far these surmises correspond with the facts. It will probably never be possible to unravel the Anglo-Russian policy of intrigue.'

### THE ETHICS OF BIOLOGY.

There are several other idols which I might attack ; for example, the doctrines that the rights of nations depend on their merits as civilizing agents ; that a nation is morally bound to co-operate with those who are akin to it by blood ;<sup>3</sup> that the policy of maintaining a balance of power is an essentially immoral policy.<sup>4</sup> And we too have had our false prophets, who, like some persons in Germany,<sup>5</sup> did not believe in the possibility of war. But

<sup>1</sup> *Our Future*, &c., p. 144.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.

<sup>3</sup> The old Roman name for Winchester (*Venta Belgarum*) reminds us of our kinship with the Belgians, whose Germanic origin is attested by Caesar in his *Gallie War*, ii. 4. But who would justify our action on that ground ?

<sup>4</sup> This is constantly asserted as against Great Britain ; but Prince von Bülow justifies Bismarck in following the same policy (*Imperial Germany*, English translation, p. 55).

<sup>5</sup> e. g. Count Hatzfeld, Count Reventlow, and Prince Lichnowsky : see *The German Enigma*, pp. 100 f., 161, 92, 94.

there is one idol which I must not pass by—the doctrine that there is no such thing as morality in the relations of states : ‘ Might is Right.’ It is curious that those who profess this doctrine go on to attempt a justification of their policy on ethical grounds, so soon as war breaks out. This is surely insincere ; let us have either one thing or the other. If international action is guided solely by force and fraud, let it not be defended on other grounds. But perhaps those who proclaim this doctrine are not quite serious in their application of the law of the ‘ survival of the fittest ’ to international relations. There is, of course, an unfortunate ambiguity in the term ‘ fit ’. But Darwin lent no countenance to the interpretation of his law as an ethical precept. Huxley, indeed, explicitly repudiated that interpretation. ‘ Social progress means a checking of the cosmic process at every step and the substitution for it of another, which may be called the ethical process ; the end of which is not the survival of those who may happen to be the fittest in respect of the whole of the conditions which exist, but of those who are ethically the best.’<sup>1</sup> But German writers of the present day, especially historians of the Berlin school, refuse to admit that the ethical process in the individual has any application to states. They fail to see that just as in the state the force of the civil arm compels obedience to the law, so in the family of nations a combination of the well-disposed may be able to enforce a respect for international law upon a nation which refuses to obey it. It is, of course, obvious that it is more difficult to bring this result about in the latter case than in the former. And we have not yet attained that ideal of a goodwill in nations which is a condition of the

<sup>1</sup> *Evolution and Ethics* (The Romanes Lecture for 1893), p. 33.



realization of their co-operation. Nevertheless the hope of the future lies in the recognition of the great truth that the relations which subsist between the individual citizen and his state ought to be reproduced in the family of nations. Each nation must learn to regard itself as a member of a great community and be prepared to strike, if necessary, in defence of the common good. In proportion as this feeling grows, we shall learn to cast behind us the immoral doctrine that the only duty of a nation is to play for its own hand, and to substitute for it the good old precept, 'Righteousness exalteth a nation.' Even now we see this hope taking shape.

A brotherhood in arms ! For right, for law !  
Presage of what shall be in days to come,  
When nations leagued in common council stand,  
Strong in good will, to impose the rule of peace  
And strike, if need be, for the general weal !

Nor need we lose heart when we reflect that the ideal of a 'concert of Europe' is not a new thing in history. It still looms before us as an aspiration, nowhere more alive, we are told, than in the land of its origin.<sup>1</sup> And a recent step of the first importance towards the realization of this dream, though it has hitherto attracted little public attention, is the agreement made between Great Britain and America that in any future dispute between these two countries a whole year shall elapse before any declaration of war.

<sup>1</sup> Prince Kropotkin, letter to *The Times*, Oct. 9, 1914, p. 5 ; cf. also Professor Vinogradoff's letter, *ibid.*, Sept. 14, p. 10 (reprinted as one of the Oxford Pamphlets).

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## GERMAN PHILOSOPHY AND THE WAR

PROFESSOR CRAMB has said that it would be possible to treat the wars of 1866 and 1870 as the work of professors and historians. With the addition of philosophers this might be said *a fortiori* of the war of 1914. It is at least true that no account of the events which led up to the present crisis can be complete which does not include the course of philosophical ideas. There is the more need to recall this inner history at the present moment as attempts have not been wanting to fix a large part of the responsibility indiscriminately on what is popularly known as German Philosophy which has dated from Kant.<sup>1</sup> What I believe on the contrary can be shown is that, so far as philosophy is responsible, it is one that represents a violent break with the ideas for which Kant and the whole early idealist movement stood. It is a story of a great rebellion, I believe on the whole a great apostasy.

### I

#### GERMAN IDEALISM

If we would understand the significance for modern thought and life of the work of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), we must recall the spirit that dominated the leading thinkers in England and France in the eighteenth century. It was an age of steady advance in physical science, the method of which is the resolution of objects

<sup>1</sup> See *Times*, Sept. 21, 1914. Letter by 'Continuity' on 'The New Barbarism'.

and entities into their constituent parts, with a view to understanding their nature and operation. Its motto might be said to be 'Nothing can be more than the aggregate of its parts'. We are not here concerned with the value of this method as applied to the special sciences, but with the consequences it brought with it when it came, as it did,<sup>1</sup> to be applied to the problems of organic and particularly of human life. In the life of intelligence it meant the attempt to explain experience as the mechanical connexion through the laws of 'association' of ideas which were the fading remnants of isolated impressions. In the life of the will it meant that actions were the result of impulses, appetites, instincts and passions that own no lord but that one amongst themselves which chanced to be the strongest. 'The Will', Hobbes had said, 'is the last appetite in deliberating'. Applied finally to society and the State it meant individualism. Society is the aggregate of individual wills, and as water cannot rise above its own level neither can the State rise above the self-seeking of its members. Itself resting ultimately on force for the cohesion of its parts, it owns no other law in its relations with other States. These ideas might be developed, as they had been by Hobbes, into a complete system of State politics and a morality based on fear, or they might be played with in a sort of *jeu d'esprit*, as they were in Mandeville's *Bees*, as the basis of a doctrine that 'private vices were public benefits', but in one form or another they constituted the philosophical enlightenment of the whole period.

Against all this the German spirit may be said to have

<sup>1</sup> Descartes had already suggested that animals were only machines. It remained to show that man, too, was a machine. Lamettries' *L'homme machine* appeared in 1748.

been in continual revolt. 'Search for the ideal runs through the whole century,'<sup>1</sup> and Goethe may be said to have summed up the mind of his time when, speaking of Holbach's *System of Nature*, the Bible of Materialism, he wrote, 'We could not understand how such a book could be dangerous. It appeared to us so dark, so Cimmerian, so death-like, that we could scarcely find patience to endure its presence.' All the same the deeper mind of the nation felt that it was dangerous so long as it went unanswered, and may be said to have been continuously occupied with the problem of a philosophical substitute for it. The most notable attempt to find such a substitute was that of the mathematician Leibniz. Unfortunately Leibniz's philosophy was vitiated by the acceptance of the very individualism that was the stronghold of materialism. After splitting up the universe into monads which were without windows, far less doors opening on the world without, he had no principle to reunite them and was fain to have recourse to the miracle of an external creator and regulator of their actions.

From the alternative that was thus forced upon the thought of the century of materialism, or unreason and incoherence, and the moral chaos to which it inevitably led, it was the merit of Kant to have offered a way of escape. The metaphysical basis of his system is too long a story to enter on here. It amounted to the demonstration that no experience of any kind, even that on which materialism itself relied, was possible except on the assumption of a constructive or, as he called it, a synthetic principle which was supplied, or at least first revealed itself consciously in mind, and was the source of our judgements of value, whether of truth, of beauty,

<sup>1</sup> Lange, *History of Materialism*, vol. ii, p. 143.

or of good. It is with the last and its application to morals and politics that we are here concerned.

As against the naturalism of his time, Kant maintained that in all judgements of moral good and bad it was implied that while man is undoubtedly part of a mechanically determined system, so far as his body and senses were concerned, yet in virtue of the law of his mind he was able to rise above his merely natural relations, and maintain himself in a spiritual, or as he called it an intelligible, world as a person among persons. The deepest thing in man was not therefore the instinct of self-assertion that separated him from others, but the self-imposed law which united him with them—the touch of reason that made all the world kin. While just in virtue of the possession of freedom it was possible to take natural impulse as his guide, and so to fall from human fellowship, it was possible also for man by accepting the rule of reason to raise himself into membership of what Kant liked to call the Kingdom of Ends. Whereas the law of nature was to treat everything only as a means to the ends of the self, the law of reason was to ‘treat humanity in their own person and the person of others always as an end and never as a means only’.

These ideas are sometimes spoken of as transcendental, as though they had no ground in experience. In reality, as William Wallace has shown,<sup>1</sup> they were suggested to Kant by a profound reading of history as a continuous effort to substitute the rule of law for the rule of force, and thus vindicate man’s true freedom. It is for this fact that the civilized State stands. *Might* the State must possess, but it is only the might of the *State*, when it is employed in the service of law and freedom. Kant was profoundly influenced by the French Revolution. He was a repub-

<sup>1</sup> Kant, c. xiv.



lican ; but a republic meant to him, as it ought to mean, the reign of a law which embodies the public good and from which all individual or class egoism has been purged away. So long as the State meant the obedience of the citizens to a self-imposed law, the actual form was comparatively unimportant, and Kant was content in his own day to be the subject of a monarch who thought of himself as the ' first servant of the State '.

But the reign of law was not confined to the relations of individuals within the State. States, too, were units—in a sense persons—and over their relations with one another there reigned the same law as bound the citizens together within them. Here, too, the appeal was to history, which showed that just as the reign of force was gradually being superseded within States, so it was being superseded by law between them. In this way there dawned upon Kant, not as a mere poetic dream, but as at once a consequence of his philosophy and a promise of actual fact, the idea of a federation of States, a republic of the world, consisting of members small and great, owing allegiance to a common law as much in the interest of the strong as of the weak. This is the idea he works out in his essay *On Perpetual Peace*, which was published in 1795. It is in the form of a treaty, of which it lays down the articles. Some of these have a special interest at the present time. The first two enjoin that the States shall themselves be free, and that the civil constitution of each shall be republican. Only thus, Kant thought, could not only the causes of discontent be removed, but the seeds of international hatred be destroyed. Kant saw in all forms of absolutism one of the most potent causes of war. Other articles refer to standing armies, in which he sees a continual menace to peace ; secret reservations in treaties which are merely a means of

blinding an enemy to the real designs of a nation and 'material for a future war'; the actual conduct of war which must be such as to avoid 'all modes of hostility which would make mutual confidence impossible in a subsequent state of peace'. As to war itself Kant was no pacifist. He was ready to recognize in it 'a deep-hidden and designed enterprise of supreme wisdom for preparing, if not for establishing, conformity to law amid the freedom of States, and with this a unity of a morally grounded system of those States'. He was further ready to recognize its purifying and exalting effect upon a nation. But he was under no delusion as to its true nature. It was the outcome of the bad principle in human nature, and however we may be tempted to find compensation for it in the evil that it uproots and in its superiority to the deadness of a universal monarchy, 'yet, as an ancient observed, it makes more bad men than it takes away'.<sup>1</sup>

There can be no doubt that Kant's ideas had a profound influence on the politics of the time. In spite of Carlyle, Frederick the Great is not a hero in England. Yet, on the whole, the spirit of his reign may be said to have been the spirit of Kant. 'The Categorical Imperative of Kant', says Seeley,<sup>2</sup> 'was appropriately first named and described in the age and country of Frederick the Great.' His claim was to be the first servant of the State, and the saying is reported of his extreme old age, 'Did the whole Gospel contain only this precept: "What ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them"', it must be owned that these few words contain the summary of all morality.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Critique of Judgement*, App. § 83, and *Philosophical Theory of Religion*, I. iii.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Stein*, vol. i, p. 44. Cf. Carlyle's account of the celebrated Miller-Arnold case in his *Frederick the Great*.

<sup>3</sup> Wallace, *ibid.*, 152.

If the ideas of Kant may be said to have presided at the birth of modern Prussia under Frederick, those of his great follower, Fichte, may be said to have been the inspiring influence of its re-birth after the humiliation that Napoleon inflicted upon her. Fichte's teaching on the Divine Idea is probably still most familiar to this country through Carlyle's essay on the 'State of German Literature'.<sup>1</sup> We are here concerned with its political application. At the nadir of his country's fortunes, in the winter of 1807-8, Fichte's *Addresses to the German Nation* were a summons from the heights. What, he asked, in times of storm is the spirit that can be put at the helm? 'Not', he answers, 'the spirit of quiet civic loyalty to the constitution and the laws. No; but the consuming flame of the higher patriotism which conceives of the Nation as the embodiment of the Eternal, for which the high-minded man devotes himself with joy; the low-minded man, who only exists for the sake of the other, must be made to devote himself.' The addresses were an appeal from the power of force to the power of the spirit:

Strive not to conquer with bodily weapons, but stand before your opponents firm and erect in the dignity of the spirit. Yours is the greater destiny to found an empire of mind and of reason, to destroy the dominion of rude physical powers as the ruler of the world. . . . Yes, there are in every nation minds who can never believe that the great promises to the human race of a kingdom of Law, of Reason, and of Truth are idle and vain delusions and who consequently cherish the conviction that the present iron-handed time is but a progression towards a better State. These, and with them the whole later races

<sup>1</sup> *Miscellaneous Essays*, vol. i.

of humanity, trust in you. If ye sink, Humanity sinks with you without hope of future restoration.<sup>1</sup>

When the time came, in 1813, to strike for the freedom which the spirit claims, Fichte was again to the fore announcing in his *Political Fragment for 1813* that 'A nation becomes a nation through war and through a common struggle. Who shares not in the present war can by no decree be incorporated in the nation.'

Hegel, the third in this great succession, was elected to Fichte's chair in Berlin in 1818 and became the spokesman of the re-established constitution. 'Let us greet the dawn of a better time,' he had already said in his inaugural address at Heidelberg, 'when the spirit that has hitherto been driven out of itself may return to itself again and win room and space wherein to found a kingdom of its own.'

But it was in his theory of the State,<sup>2</sup> which he developed in the Berlin period, that we have to look for the chief source of his political influence. The State he conceived of after Kant as 'the actualization of freedom'. It is 'the world which the spirit has made for itself'. It is sometimes thought that the State has weakened in modern times. Not so, says Hegel: 'The modern State has enormous strength and depth.' It is just this that enables it without detriment to itself to do full justice to individual and sectional interests. The political disposition, in other words patriotism (Hegel will not separate them as Fichte does),

<sup>1</sup> Some courage was needed for this plain speaking. A luckless printer of Nürnberg in the previous year had been shot for publishing a pamphlet on *Germany in its Deep Humiliation*. See Adamson's Fichte, p. 81.

<sup>2</sup> *Philosophy of Law*, English translation by Dyde.

is just 'the confident consciousness that my particular interest is contained and preserved in the interest and end of the State'.

It is on the ground of his exaltation of the State and his manifest leaning to the Prussian form of monarchy that Hegel has been accused of having cast a slight on international law and organization and of being the philosopher of the Prussian military tradition.<sup>1</sup> This view can only be maintained if to have vindicated one factor in the moral order of the world must be taken to mean the denial of others. Hegel had lived through the enthusiasm of the French Revolution and, like Burke in England, had come to realize the element of individualism and anarchy which it contained. He felt that the time had come to vindicate the reality of the State as of the very substance of individual, family, and national life. Further than this there is no ground to ally his political teaching with military tradition. He expressly rejects the militarist doctrine that the State rests upon force. 'The binding cord is not force, but the deep-seated feeling of order that is possessed by us all.' He has no words strong enough for von Haller, the von Treitschke of his time, who had written :

It is the eternal unchangeable decree of God that the most powerful rules, must rule, and will for ever rule,

and who had poured contempt on the national liberties of Germany and our own Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights as mere 'documentary liberties'.<sup>2</sup>

With equal decisiveness he would have rejected the doctrine that war is the 'continuation of politics'.

<sup>1</sup> See Mr. Barker's *Nietzsche and Treitschke* in this series, p. 4, and Dr. Michael Sadler's *Modern Germany and the Modern World*, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> *op. cit.* p. 243, n.



He would have agreed with Aristotle that the State 'comes into being for the sake of life, but continues in being for the good life'. War is not the continuation but the failure of politics. Its true continuation is the life of art, science, religion, for the full development of which it is the essential condition. Nor would he have tolerated the doctrine that the State is the ultimate appeal in matters of right. Above and beyond the State there is the Spirit of the World or the Spirit of God: 'the history of the world is the judgement of the world'. It was he who said of Napoleon that he had brought the highest genius to victory only to show how little victory alone could achieve against the moral forces of the world. It is true that his political theory was approved by contemporary statesmen, but before his death they had come to suspect that there was 'perilous stuff' in it for all reactionary and repressive policies.<sup>1</sup> It is not in Hegel but in the violent reaction that set in shortly after his death, in 1831, against the whole Idealist philosophy that we have to look for the philosophical foundations of Prussian militarism.

## II

### THE REACTION AGAINST IDEALISM

The story of this reaction is a complicated one. That it was due in part to a certain high-handedness in method and obscurity in result of the older philosophy cannot, I think, be denied. But the main causes lay elsewhere. I select two of the chief factors in it.

1. Germany has been accused of culpable absent-mindedness in occupying herself with mystical speculations while other countries, by commerce, colonization, mining, and manufacture, were laying the foundations

<sup>1</sup> See E. Caird's *Hegel*, p. 94.

of material power. I believe that, on the contrary, never was Germany truer to herself than when, in the instinctive conviction that no civilization could be secure in which the things of most value in life rested on no surer foundation than tradition or unverified instinct, she devoted herself to the task of verifying them to the reason. But this only made the reaction more violent when the time for material expansion came, and coal and iron took the place of reason and freedom as the watchwords of the time. The 'forties and the 'fifties were years of rapid development in all parts of Germany. With the needs of industry went the need of concentrating the intellectual resources of the nation on the physical sciences. This is what had taken place in other countries. What was peculiar to Germany was that the old metaphysical habit reasserted itself in the changed circumstances, and chemists and physiologists seized the trowel which the metaphysicians had dropped.<sup>1</sup> The result was that, going along with the material expansion and the devotion to the special sciences it evoked, we have a philosophy which sought to invert the old order and to read matter and body where it had read mind and spirit. 'The old philosophy', said Feuerbach, who first raised the standard of revolt, 'started from the principle: I am a thinking being, the body is no part of my being. The new philosophy, on the other hand, begins with the principle: I am a real and sensible being; the body is part of my being; nay, the body is its totality, is my ego, is itself my essence.' To the same period belong Karl Marx's materialistic interpretation of history and his exaltation of the economic interests to the place of the ruling factor in human development. But not in vain

<sup>1</sup> See Lange, loc. cit.

had Feuerbach and Marx sat at the feet of Hegel. In both the humanitarian note was more pronounced than the materialistic, and the development of the implications of their starting-point was left to younger writers.

The way was prepared by two events in the field of science which roughly divide the period, the experimental demonstration by Robert Mayer of the Conservation of Energy (1842), and the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859. Belonging to the first period we must reckon a group of writers of whom probably Büchner was the most widely known, his book, *Matter and Force*, published in 1855, going through sixteen editions in as many years. They may be said to have expressed the reigning spirit in the great period of industrial development that marked the middle of the century and made possible the victories of 1866 and 1870. It is, of course, a mistake to hold that either of these movements—the practical or the theoretical—by itself is necessarily hostile to a comprehensive view of life. Materialism has been the creed of some of the noblest of the human race. It is the combination of them that is dangerous—when the commercial, money-making spirit is tempted to seek in a materialistic philosophy for the justification of what it would like to believe as to the chief ends of life. That something like this happened in Germany at this time is borne out by the judgement of the greatest of German historians. 'Everything', wrote Ranke of it, 'is falling. No one thinks of anything but commerce and money.'<sup>1</sup>

The social and political implications of Darwinism have from the first been a subject of controversy. There

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Professor Hicks in his article on 'German Philosophy and the Present Crisis', *Hibbert Journal*, Oct., 1914.

are two ways in which Natural Selection may be interpreted. The struggle for existence may be taken to be one among other agencies in development. In the lower orders of creation it may be said to be of dominant importance, as in fishes, where thousands of the spawn are sacrificed that one may survive. But as we advance in the scale of intelligence, it is gradually superseded by the power of organizing the environment and securing the survival of the species with growing economy. In civilized communities it may be said, in its crude form, to have been altogether superseded. The struggle is no longer for bare existence, but for a particular form of existence involving the opportunity of becoming a parent—‘selection for parentage’, as it has been called. What is true, moreover, within societies, may, in the course of time, without detriment to the race, come to be true of societies in their external relations with one another. According to another interpretation, struggle is the supreme law of life, and rages, in however disguised a form, in the higher as in the lower orders of creation, between societies as between individuals. While, according to the first of these two views, there is no limit to the extent to which the rule of force may be eliminated consistently with a high level of physical and mental fitness, according to the latter, struggle is the sole effective instrument, and all attempts to eliminate it are doomed to failure.

If we turn to Darwin himself there is nothing to connect him with the second of these views. On the contrary, he more than once distinctly repudiates it.

With highly civilized nations continued progress depends, in a subordinate degree, on natural selection for such nations do not supplant and exterminate each other as do savage tribes

And again :

Important as the struggle for existence has been, and still is, yet as far as the highest part of man's nature is concerned, there are other agencies more important. For the moral qualities are advanced either directly or indirectly much more through the effects of habit, the reasoning powers, instruction, religion, &c., than through natural selection.<sup>1</sup>

This has, on the whole, been the view taken in England. In Germany the seed fell on ground prepared by a quarter of a century of materialistic thought. Whether it is the one generally accepted by biologists it would be difficult to say. At any rate it was the one adopted by the most distinguished in this field of his time in Germany.

' The theory of selection teaches us ', writes Haeckel, ' that in human life, exactly as in animal and plant life, at each place and time, only a privileged minority can continue to exist and flourish. The cruel and relentless struggle for existence which rages throughout all living nature, and in accordance with nature must rage, this ceaseless and pitiless competition of all living things is an undeniable fact ; only the select minority, the privileged fit, is in a position to successfully survive this competition, the great majority of competitors must meanwhile of necessity perish miserably. We may mourn this tragic fact, but we cannot deny or alter it. Obviously the principle of selection is anything but democratic ; it is aristocratic in the precise sense of the word.' <sup>2</sup>

Had this been an academic opinion as to the social tendencies of Darwinism without specific application to ethics and external politics, it would have had little significance in the present connexion. But it was the view

<sup>1</sup> These passages are quoted from the *Descent of Man* by Karl Pearson, in his *Chances of Death*, vol. i, pp. 127-8.

<sup>2</sup> *Freie Wissenschaft u. freie Lehre*, quoted ib.



underlying the writer's *Riddle of the Universe*, which was published in the last year of the nineteenth century and probably had a wider circulation in Germany than any work of the kind has ever had. It ran through several editions in two years, was subsequently issued in popular form, and by 1906 was being sold in tens of thousands. It contains a remarkable chapter on 'Our Monistic Ethics', in which the external policy of England is attacked for its direct contradiction of every precept of Christianity, while at the same time the principles which are attributed to her are claimed as those which rightly govern international relations.

'The glaring contradiction', so the passage ends, 'between the theoretical *ideal* and altruistic morality of the human individual and the *real* purely selfish morality of the human community, and especially the civilized Christian State, is a familiar fact. It would be interesting to determine mathematically in what proportion among organized men the altruistic ethical ideal of the individual changes into its contrary the purely egoistic "real politics" of one State and the nation.'

2. This is ominous doctrine. But it was along the second line of development mentioned above that it received its most sinister expression.

Side by side with the development of the materialistic element in Feuerbach's philosophy, there rose out of the disturbed times that preceded the revolutions of 1848 a violent reaction against the humanitarian ideas with which Feuerbach had sought to combine it. 'My first thought', Feuerbach had announced 'was God, my second was Reason, my last was Man.' But if, as he held, God and Reason were mere abstractions, why not also Man? This was the question raised by a remarkable book which appeared under the *nom de plume* of Max Stirner,

with the title of *The Sole One and his Own*,<sup>1</sup> in 1844. 'God and man', so runs its claim, 'have concerned themselves for nothing but themselves. Let me likewise concern myself for myself who am equally with God, the nothing of all others; who am my all, who am the only one.' After showing that the life of the individual and the course of civilization is a progress towards emancipation, first from things, then from ideas ('the child is realistic, the youth is idealistic, man is egoistic'), the writer boldly applies his doctrine to current ethics and politics, demanding a transvaluation of all values, which anticipates in a remarkable way the teaching of Nietzsche. 'What's good? what's bad?' he asks. 'I myself am my own concern and I am neither good nor bad. Neither has any meaning for me.' From this it follows that my 'rights' have no foundation except in my power, and that whatever opposes this in the name of family, society, nation, or State, is my enemy.

My rights are what I can master. Whatever interferes with this is my enemy. As enemy of myself count I therefore every form of community.

'To neither man nor the State do I owe anything at all. I offer it nothing. I use it only. That is, I annihilate it and put in its place the society of egoists.' 'Sacred,' say you. 'Take courage while there is time. To be rid of the sacred you have only to devour it.' The note of revolt against all the recognized standards of present-day civilization was struck by Stirner in what has been called 'the most radical, unsocial, and subversive book which last century produced'. It was taken up, combined with the other factors in the revolt above mentioned, and carried through a hundred variations by Nietzsche (1844-1900).

<sup>1</sup> Eng. tr. *The Ego and his Own* (Fifield), 1913

## III

## THE NEW NATURALISM

The chief ideas for which Nietzsche stands have already been indicated in this series;<sup>1</sup> it is with their connexion with a general philosophical movement that we are here concerned. (a) In his own view Nietzsche stood with Schopenhauer in open rebellion against the whole philosophy which sought in the organizing work of mind for the type of reality. 'The mind', he declares, 'counts for us only as a symptom of relative imperfection and weakening of the organism as a stage of experimenting and feeling about and missing our aim.' Our true life is to be looked for not in experiences that (in his own phrase) have been 'sifted through with reason', but in the dark, unconscious, and instinctive elements of our nature. (b) He goes beyond Schopenhauer and allies himself with Stirner in interpreting these instincts in terms of the ego :

I submit that egoism belongs to the essence of a noble soul. Aggressive and defensive egoism are not questions of choice or of free will, but they are fatalities of life itself.

But again he goes beyond the author of *The Ego and his Own* in declaring that the central impulse of the ego is neither life nor enjoyment, but Power :

A living being seeks above all to discharge his strength. Life itself is the will to power. It is this that every man in his inmost heart desires—to assert himself against the world without, to appropriate, injure, suppress, exploit. . . . Exploitation belongs to the nature of the living being as a primary organic function. It is a consequence of the intrinsic will to power.

<sup>1</sup> See Mr. Barker's finely balanced appreciation in *Nietzsche and Treitschke*.

The mortal sickness of our age, the sign of its decadence, is that we have been willing to exchange this unchartered freedom for the slave's portion of security, and low-scale gregarious well-being represented by Christianity and the democratic State. But it was not always so. Primitive natural morality recognized a wholly different standard of values, and in the history of civilization these were at least once embodied in a worthy form in the Roman Empire—only to fall a victim to the vampire of Christianity. But 'Vengeance only lingers. False values and fatuous words bear a fate with them. Long it slumbers and waits, but at last it comes, and awakes and devours and engulfs.'

The call of the age is for a deliverer who can stamp it, as Napoleon stamped his, with the image of power, the image of a new ethics, 'under the pressure and hammer of which a conscience shall be steeled and a heart transformed into brass to bear the weight of the new responsibility.' The danger is that when he appears he should be captured by the old false philosophy and sublimated, as Kant tried to sublimate Frederick the Great, into a servant of the people. It is for this reason that there runs as a recurrent strain through Nietzsche's writings the necessity of stamping out the last remnants of the Tartuffian philosophy of Königsberg—the Will to Good—and substituting for it the true gospel of the Will to Power.

It would be easy to find in Nietzsche another note and even to show, as William Wallace does,<sup>1</sup> that in the later phases of the development of his thought on the Superman, he was forced into the recognition of something approaching the old Greek doctrine of a divinity that shapes our ends. But these remained only hints,

<sup>1</sup> *Lectures and Essays*, p. 540

and it is the less necessary to follow them here as this higher note was not likely to be caught by a generation whose ear had been trained in a different music, and as Nietzsche himself did his best to drown it in the blare of his paradoxical naturalism.

Yet even on this level it would be difficult to find in his teaching anything that could be taken as an incentive to a policy of national violence. On the contrary it would be easy to find much that condemns it. It has been pointed out by the writer of 'The New German Theory of the State' in *Why we are at War*, that 'in his later years Nietzsche revolted against the Prussian military system'. But he was never enamoured of it. So early as 1871 we find him deeply disturbed by the spirit that was being fostered in the nation by its military successes. Developing the theme in *Unseasonable Contemplations*, in 1873, he warns Germany against the error of supposing that the success of 1870 was due to anything that could be called German Culture. 'A great victory', he writes, 'is a great danger. The greatest error at the present is the belief that this fortunate war has been won by German Culture. At present both the public and the private life of Germany shows every sign of the utmost want of culture.' The same note is struck in 1889 when he complains that 'There are no longer German philosophers. German seriousness, profundity, and *passion* in intellectual matters are more and more on the decline. The State and civilization are antagonistic. Germany has gained as to the former, but lost in regard to the latter. Education has been vulgarized to utilitarianism and has lost its high aim.'<sup>1</sup> It would scarcely be too much to say that his ideal approximated nearer to

<sup>1</sup> *The Twilight of the Idols.*



Kant's, of a new non-national or supernational type of civilization, than to that of the idolizers of any particular nation. 'Nations', he tells us, 'are something artificial at present and unstable', wisely adding: 'such nations should most carefully avoid all hot-headed rivalry and hostility'. 'In Europe at least', he hoped, 'the barriers between different nations will disappear more and more and a new type of man will arise—the European.' But these were reservations which, along with the whole philosophical atmosphere that accompanied them, it was only too easy to overlook, and not the least of the tragedies of my story is that there had risen up historians and military writers prepared to accept and give currency to the philosophy of power in its barest and crudest form.

Of these Treitschke has rightly been taken as the typical. Born at Dresden in 1834 and professor of history successively at Freiburg and Heidelberg, he placed himself in violent antagonism to South German particularism and liberalism:

'I am longing', he wrote, 'for the North, to which I belong with all my heart, and where also our fate will be decided. If I am to choose between the two parties I select that of Bismarck, since he struggles for Prussian power, for our legitimate position on the North and the Eastern Sea.'<sup>1</sup>

He was, as he tells us himself, more patriot than professor, and when at last, in 1874, he was called to the Chair of History in Berlin he felt that the time and opportunity had come to rouse his country to a sense of the great destiny which awaited it. After describing the crowded audiences of princes, statesmen, soldiers,

<sup>1</sup> *Treitschke: His Life and Works* (Allen & Unwin), p. 18.

diplomats, and leaders of society which he addressed with a natural eloquence which made them feel there was nothing he was not ready to dare for his opinions, Professor Cramb asks what they came together to hear ? and he answers :

They came together to hear the story of the manner in which God or the World-spirit, through shifting and devious paths, had led Germany and the Germans to their present exalted station under Prussia and the Hohenzollern—those great princes who in German worth and German uprightness are unexampled in the dynasties of Europe and of the world. Treitschke showed them German unity and therefore German freedom lying like the fragments of a broken sword, like that of Roland or of Sigurd or the Grey-Steel of the Sagas ; and these fragments Prussia alone could weld again into dazzling wholeness and might.’<sup>1</sup>

But this was only one side of his teaching. He supported it with lectures on politics, in which the changed spirit that had come to pervade the philosophy of Germany since Hegel occupied a similar place stood out with startling clearness. In one thing he was in agreement with Hegel’s teaching. The lesson, we might say, of the State and the Nation had in the meantime been learned, some would say over-learned. ‘The State’, says Treitschke, ‘dates from the very beginning and is necessary. It has existed as long as history, and is as essential to humanity as language.’<sup>2</sup> But here agreement ceases. For the rest we have a vehement reassertion of doctrines of which the whole Idealist movement had been the denial. Hegel, as we have seen, repudiated the doctrine that the State was founded upon force. It rested on the disposition and the will

<sup>1</sup> *Germany and England*, p. 89.

<sup>2</sup> *Lectures on Politics*, i, § 1 (English translation by Gowans).

of the governed. With Aristotle he held that it came into existence for the sake of life, its abiding purpose was the good life—the life of science, art, religion.

In opposition to all this Treitschke fiercely announces :

The State is in the first instance power. It is not the totality of the people itself, as Hegel assumed. On principle it does not ask how the people is disposed ; it demands obedience.

The State is no academy of arts ; if it neglects its power in favour of the ideal strivings of mankind it renounces its nature and goes to ruin. The renunciation of its own power is for the State in the most real sense the sin against the Holy Ghost.

If art is incompatible with politics, religion is its sworn enemy. It starts from an opposite principle : ‘ Religion wishes to know only what it believes ; the State to believe only what it knows.’<sup>1</sup> So of the form of union required by each. ‘ The ideal of a religious fellowship is there public. But as the State is in the first instance power, its ideal is undoubtedly the monarchy, because in it the power of the State expresses itself in an especially decided and consistent way.’ True—real monarchs are becoming scarce, even in Germany. ‘ Prussia alone has still a real monarch who is entirely independent of any higher power,’<sup>2</sup> and who is prepared to say with Gustavus Adolphus, ‘ I recognize no one above me but God and the sword of the victor.’<sup>3</sup> But that can be remedied by extending the benefits of the Prussian

<sup>1</sup> This I take to be a parody of Hegel’s statement ‘ The State is that which knows’, *op. cit.*, § 270, n. Hegel’s own view is condensed in the sentence : ‘ Since ethical and political principles pass over into the realm of religion and not only *are* established but *must be* established in reference to religion, the State is thus furnished with religious confirmation.’

<sup>2</sup> *op. cit.*, iii, § 17.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, i, § 1.

monarchy and the Culture it represents, as Treitschke generously desires to do to other less favoured lands.

The instrument of this idealistic extension is war. 'It is precisely political idealism that demands wars, while it is materialism that condemns them.'<sup>1</sup> International law certainly has to be taken into account as an historical development. But it succeeds best in time of peace in adjusting the forms of intercourse between nations. It has a more limited application to the manner of conducting war after it has broken out. But to apply it to the limitation of the right to declare war is a vain and degenerate dream. Here 'no State in the wide world can venture to relinquish the *ego* of its sovereignty'. 'It has always been the tired, unintelligent, and enervated periods that have played with the dream of perpetual peace.'<sup>2</sup>

It is not surprising that these doctrines should have found favour among military writers in Germany, descending in them to even a lower grade of crudity. A great deal has been said by the apologists of Germany as to the obscurity in his own country of von Bernhardi. But that is not the point. His books are written for the military class, and you would no more expect to find them on the bookshelves or drawing-room tables of the ordinary educated man than you would expect Hegel's *Logic* or *Philosophy of Right*. The point is that these ideas have been taken up by able specialists and made by them the philosophical background of military instruction.

It is not my business here to discuss the truth of *Realpolitik* as thus interpreted. My task has been to show

<sup>1</sup> op. cit., § 2.

<sup>2</sup> op. cit., v, § 28. It follows naturally from these principles with regard to neutrals that 'If a State is not in a condition to maintain its neutrality, all talk about the same is mere claptrap.'

that it comes to us not as a continuous and legitimate development of which we are accustomed to think as 'German Philosophy', but as a reaction against it. I may, however, be permitted to remind the reader that as these ideas are not new in theory neither do they appeal for the first time to 'the judgement of the world'. They have been judged in a hundred decisive battle-fields from Marathon to Waterloo. If they are now judged once more and if there is truth in this story, we shall be able to appeal for confirmation of the judgement of history not to any philosophy of ours but to the better mind of Germany itself, the mind that found its highest and most condensed expression in Kant and Hegel and the doctrine of the Will to Good.





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## A SHORT OUTLINE OF PRUSSIAN HISTORY, TO 1871

THE German Empire to-day consists of twenty-six separate and individual states, each having its own ruler and its own government, but combined for certain purposes, like the United States of America, into a federal union under the hereditary sovereignty of the King of Prussia. This federal empire was established in 1871, after Prussia had defeated in turn her two great rivals, Austria and France. It was the creation of Bismarck and the then King of Prussia, and in the arrangements made for its administration Prussia was deliberately given the preponderance of power in its government—which preponderance it still retains. We have to see, therefore, how Prussia gradually attained to this position of leadership among the many German states. The history of Germany for the last two hundred years is the history of the rise of Prussia, and the history of Prussia is largely the history of the house of Hohenzollern.

The Counts of Hohenzollern were established as far back as the tenth century at the castle of Zollern in South Germany, but it was not till 1147 that one of them became Elector (i.e. Prince) of Brandenburg, the district between the Elbe and the Oder, in the centre of which is Berlin. From this province as a nucleus grew the modern kingdom of Prussia. At that time the Prussians proper dwelt in the districts around Danzig



## OUTLINE OF

and Königsberg, called respectively West and East Prussia. They were a Slavonic race, like the Russians, not Teutonic, like the Brandenburgers, and were subject to the King of Poland. They remained heathen long after the rest of Germany was Christianized.

East Prussia was added to the possessions of the Elector of Brandenburg in 1525, but remained under Polish suzerainty.

From 1618 to 1648 the whole of Germany was distracted and devastated by the Thirty Years' War—a civil conflict arising out of religious differences—and at its close the history of Brandenburg-Prussia really begins.

In 1640 there ascended the throne of Brandenburg the Elector Frederick William, known in history as the Great Elector. He was the first great Hohenzollern and the direct ancestor, eight generations back, of the present German Emperor. At the end of the Thirty Years' War his dominions were increased by the addition of part of Pomerania (on the Baltic, north-east of Brandenburg), two small provinces adjoining Brandenburg on the south-west, and a few detached fragments on and near the Rhine. The whole area was approximately a sixth of that of the present German Empire and a quarter of that of modern Prussia. Thus the Great Elector displays from the beginning one of the chief distinguishing marks of the Hohenzollerns. 'He it is who is the real founder of the State of Prussia. . . . Centralization of government, military rule, constant territorial aggrandisement have been the characteristics of the Prussian monarchy' (Wakeman). The same historian sums up his character in these words :

A true Hohenzollern in his absolute identification of his country with his own crown, he never rose above the pure selfishness of patriotism. Not one spark of

generosity illuminated his policy, not one grain of idealism coloured his ambition, no sentiment of moral right ever interfered with his judgment, no fear of future retribution arrested his action. Mean-minded, false, and unscrupulous, he was the first sovereign to display the principles of seventeenth-century Machiavellianism . . . in all the hideous brutality of German coarseness.

Another writer says :

To him the aggrandisement at home and abroad of the House of Hohenzollern was the one and only end. . . . Territorial acquisitions were what he above all desired, and he attained the great success of freeing East Prussia alike from Swedish and from Polish suzerainty (Atkinson).

Frederick William was the founder of Prussia's national standing army, that instrument of policy which Frederick the Great was afterwards to raise to the highest pitch of perfection, and which was to wipe out at Leipzig the disgrace and humiliation of Jena. By the year 1655 it numbered 26,000 men.

In 1688 the Great Elector was succeeded by his son, Frederick III, who in 1701 was crowned at Königsberg as King Frederick I of Prussia. Henceforth we are concerned no longer with Electors of Brandenburg but with Kings of Prussia.

The next king, Frederick William I, ascended the throne in 1713. He was an unattractive personality, harsh and despotic, but he played an important part in the development of the Prussian kingdom, building on the foundations laid by the Great Elector. His policy was characterized by thoroughness, absolutism, and secrecy. He raised the numbers of his army during his reign of twenty-seven years from 38,000 to nearly 90,000 men, including his famous Giants' Regiment of

Potsdam Grenadiers. He ruled his army with a rod of iron, and attached the utmost importance to drill of a very stiff and formal kind. The army was fed at first by voluntary enlistment, but in 1733 a system of universal liability to service was established, though with many exemptions. The class distinctions which were so marked a feature of Prussian society down to 1807 were rigidly observed in the army. The officers were all drawn from the native nobility, or Junkers. In training this army the king was largely assisted by the famous Prince Leopold of Dessau, commonly known as 'the Old Dessauer', who had served under Prince Eugene at Blenheim and Malplaquet, and had helped to train Marlborough's infantry. But despite the care lavished upon it, Frederick William made little use of his army in furthering the interests of his kingdom. It remained for his son to employ it for the purposes of aggression and aggrandizement.

Frederick William I married Sophia Dorothea, the sister of the English King George II, whose electorate of Hanover adjoined the province of Brandenburg.

On the death of Frederick William I in 1740 he was succeeded by his son Frederick II, better known as Frederick the Great, the most celebrated of the Hohenzollerns, and one of the greatest generals of modern times. In the same year the Emperor Charles VI also died, leaving the crown of Austria, in accordance with an arrangement of long standing, to his daughter Maria Theresa, a beautiful and spirited princess. Frederick at once invaded Silesia, the valley of the upper Oder, which was a part of Maria's inheritance. England, France, and Bavaria joined in, and the Silesian war became the war of the Austrian Succession. But Frederick was playing entirely for his own hand—all that he

wanted was to add Silesia to Prussia, and he was entirely successful.

In 1756 another great war, known as the Seven Years' War, broke out between Frederick and Maria Theresa. France this time joined Austria, and England in consequence sided with Prussia. Frederick's chief battles were fought at Rossbach, Leuthen, Minden, Kunersdorf, and Torgau. The war ended in 1763 with the Treaty of Hubertsburg, and Silesia became permanently Prussian.

Nine years later took place the First Partition of Poland. This was accomplished without bloodshed—a peculiarly cynical transaction—by a treaty between Prussia, Russia, and Austria. Galicia fell to Austria's share, and Frederick acquired West Prussia (without Danzig, however), which joined up the disconnected parts of his dominions.

Of Frederick the Great's personal characteristics—his passion for all things French, his friendship with Voltaire, and his devotion to music—we cannot here speak, but something must be said of his military reforms, for he was first and foremost a soldier.

His army was only half composed of Prussians ; the remainder were drawn from other states. As in the days of Frederick William I it relied largely for its efficiency on the formal drill inculcated by ' the Old Dessauer ', combined with steady fire tactics. Frederick at first had a preference for the *arme blanche*, but gradually became converted to the doctrine that ' battles are won by fire superiority '.

In tactics, Frederick's favourite mode of attack was the ' Oblique Order ', by which was meant a rapid concentration of his forces on one wing, immediately after deployment, so as to roll up the enemy's line by taking it in the flank. Occasionally he employed

a 'turning movement' instead of an outflanking one, by sending a portion of his army right round his enemy's flank to attack in the rear.

Three years after the death of Frederick the Great in 1786 the French Revolution broke out. His nephew, who succeeded him as Frederick William II, was the first to take up arms against revolutionary France, in alliance with the Emperor Leopold II, the brother of the ill-fated Queen Marie Antoinette. A Prussian army, under the Duke of Brunswick, invaded France and captured the fortresses of Longwy and Verdun, but retired after the celebrated cannonade of Valmy, a long-range artillery duel with the French which led to nothing. But Prussia's action, though she posed as the champion of outraged royalty, was entirely selfish, and on finding that France was no easy prey to be partitioned like Poland, she withdrew from the contest after three years, much to the vexation of her allies.

In 1793 the Second Partition of Poland gave to Prussia the district of Posen, on her eastern frontier, along with Danzig and Thorn, and two years later, by the Third Partition, she obtained the whole of the Warsaw region. This partly accounts for Frederick William's withdrawal from the struggle with France, for the task of trying to assimilate his new Polish subjects was quite sufficient to occupy him. It is noteworthy that Prussia still regarded the east as the only possible direction in which she could expand. By the Treaty of Basel (1795) she even relinquished to France some parts of her western possessions, as the Rhine became the French boundary.

For the next eleven years (1795-1806) Prussia maintained her neutrality, despite the various coalitions made against France and the attempts of the allies to



obtain her aid. In 1797 Frederick William was succeeded by his son, Frederick William III. He was 'simple, pious and straightforward, but rather stupid', and his accession made little change in the affairs of Prussia. But ever since the death of Frederick the Great her administration, both civil and military, had been declining. Her army was content to rest on its laurels, while the bureaucratic and centralized government instituted in the spacious days of Frederick the Great and his father naturally decayed and grew corrupt when weaker hands controlled it. And, meanwhile, Napoleon was subjugating continental Europe and bringing each nation in turn to its knees. In 1806 Prussia's turn came, and her humiliation was the more complete as her self-confidence had been so great.

Napoleon's plan was to win over to himself the smaller states of Germany by flattering them with the appearance of independence. He raised the rulers of Bavaria, Saxony, and Württemberg to the rank of kings, and then proceeded (1806) to form the Confederation of the Rhine, consisting of sixteen of the chief central and southern German states, as a menace to Prussia and Austria and a substitute for the Holy Roman Empire, which very soon ceased to exist.

This Confederation, with a total population of 8,000,000, was under Napoleon's protection, and its armies were at his disposal. His next step was to force war on Prussia, whose neutrality he had already contemptuously violated in his march against Austria in 1805.

The Prussian army in 1806 has been described as :

nothing but the army of Frederick the Great grown twenty years older. . . . Old age had rendered the majority of the higher officers totally unfit for

military service. . . . Aged men, with the rank of majors, colonels, and generals, mouldered in the offices of country towns, and murmured at the very mention of a war, which would deprive them of half their salaries. . . . The higher officers were, on an average, nearly double the age of French officers of corresponding rank (Fyffe).

The only young officers were the nobles, who, it is said, arrogantly sharpened their swords on the doorstep of the French Embassy before proceeding to meet Napoleon.

The result of the meeting was completely disastrous for Prussia. Napoleon and Davoust utterly routed her armies in the twin battles of Jena and Auerstädt (near Weimar). All the chief fortresses of Prussia thereupon surrendered to Napoleon, and Davoust occupied Berlin. Napoleon himself visited the tomb of Frederick the Great at Potsdam, and removed from it Frederick's sword and Order of the Black Eagle, which he sent back to Paris. His treatment of Prussia was harsher and more cruel than that of any other of his conquests, and it has been suggested that this was due to his jealousy of the memory of Frederick the Great. 'The bitter thoroughness of the war of 1870', says Dr. J. E. Morris, 'was the result of the rout of Jena-Auerstädt.'

By the year 1807 the Kingdom of Prussia was reduced to the four provinces of Brandenburg, Silesia, and the two Prussias, a total area of about 62,000 square miles, with a population of under 5,000,000. (Prussia's area to-day is nearly 135,000 square miles, and her population 40,000,000.) Her Polish possessions were taken from her and given to the King of Saxony, who became Grand Duke of Warsaw. Her army was limited to 42,000 men, and was to be at the service of Napoleon. An impossible fine was levied upon her, and in default

of payment the country was garrisoned by French soldiers. Certain of her old provinces (Magdeburg and Halberstadt) were combined with Brunswick and Hesse-Cassel to make the new Kingdom of Westphalia for Napoleon's brother Jerome, but the remaining states of the Confederation of the Rhine continued to be ruled by German princes.

But this era of Prussia's deepest degradation was the starting-point of a new upward movement towards national honour and self-respect. The national spirit of the people was aroused, and at the crisis of their fate they were fortunate in being served by capable, disinterested, and patriotic ministers, though, strangely enough, most of them were not actually Prussians. The period between 1807 and 1813 was marked by important administrative reforms, as well as by the growth of a strong patriotic sentiment, aimed chiefly, of course, at the overthrow of French domination. These reforms are connected with the names of Stein, Hardenberg, Scharnhorst, and Gneisenau. Baron von Stein was placed in office at the end of 1807 by Napoleon, but proved less amenable to that monarch's wishes than he had anticipated and was summarily removed a year later. In that short time, however, he accomplished much, and his work of reform was continued in 1810 by Prince von Hardenberg.

Stein was responsible for the abolition of serfdom and class privileges throughout Prussia. The position of the Prussian serf before that date has been compared to that of the villein in England in the time of the Wars of the Roses, which shows how backward was the development of the country. A system of municipal self-government was established at the same time. It was intended to form part of a wider scheme of

representative government, but the minister's premature dismissal prevented the completion of the measure.

Education was also dealt with, the national system being reorganized and improved, and several new universities were founded, among them that of Berlin (1809). It is noteworthy that compulsory school attendance had been instituted as early as the year 1716.

More striking and far-reaching, however, than these changes were the reforms adopted in the organization of the army. They were planned by a military commission under the presidency of von Scharnhorst, who was aided and advised by Field-Marshal von Gneisenau, afterwards Blücher's chief of staff at Waterloo. In order to evade Napoleon's limitation of the army to 42,000 men, the short-service system was introduced. By this system men were passed rapidly from the standing army of 42,000 into the Reserve, making way for new recruits. This, combined with a more vigorous enforcement of the universal liability to service, resulted in the training of large numbers of men without appearing to violate Napoleon's commands. At the same time a *Landwehr* and a *Landsturm* were organized (though they were not enrolled until 1813), the former a militia for home defence only, and the latter a mass levy of the entire population, who were drilled and inspected in secret.

Thus Prussia directed into useful channels the patriotic ardour of her people, and prepared to throw off the foreign yoke. The chief stumbling-block in her way, strangely enough, was not Napoleon but her own King Frederick William III, who held out to the last against the growing national and anti-French sentiment of his people. His hand, however, was at length forced by the daring action of General York. In 1812 Prussia was compelled

to aid Napoleon in his disastrous attack on Russia, and York was in command of the Prussian forces. After the retreat from Moscow he boldly withdrew his army from Napoleon, went over with it to the Russians, and concluded a treaty with them entirely on his own responsibility. The king played up to his lead, while Stein, now an exile in St. Petersburg, used his influence with the Czar in the same direction. The result was an alliance between Russia and Prussia against France. The treaty was signed at Kalisch early in 1813. Prussia had to give up what was left of her Polish possessions, and turn her eyes from the Slavonic east to the Teutonic west.

The War of Liberation (1813) was short and decisive. The allies were at first defeated at Lutzen and Bautzen (May), but during a seven weeks' armistice they were joined by Austria and Bavaria. Though they lost another battle at Dresden (August), the great three days' Battle of the Nations at Leipzig (October) ended in the complete rout of Napoleon, and Jena-Auerstädt was avenged. Next year Blücher invaded France. After various battles the allies entered Paris and compelled Napoleon to abdicate. The remaining events of the years 1814 and 1815 are not specifically Prussian, and are too well known to need mention.

After Europe had finally freed herself from the presence of the great Corsican, Prussia found herself possessed of somewhat less territory than she had owned in 1806. By the arrangements made at the Congress of Vienna (1814-15) she obtained a block of provinces on both banks of the Rhine (which were far more valuable than her lost Polish provinces), parts of Saxony and central Germany, and the districts of Posen and Pomerania. The chief German states, thirty-eight in number, were



formed into a *Bund*, or Federation, under the permanent leadership of Austria—practically the old Confederation of the Rhine, with the addition of Austria and Prussia.

The outstanding feature in European history in the generation which followed the downfall of Napoleon is the conflict of the allied principles of nationalism and liberalism with the forces of reaction. It is to be seen in all countries, though here in England it took less violent forms than on the continent. The ideal which in this connexion is called liberalism was crystallized in each country in the demand for a constitution—a settled form of government not subject to the personal caprice of the sovereign. With this demand was closely bound up, especially in Germany and Italy, the desire for national unity. The party of reaction regarded such ideas as revolutionary. In the end liberalism was largely victorious, but reaction died hard. Its chief exponent was the famous Austrian chancellor, Prince Metternich, who ‘dominates the stage of European history for a generation’.

Three waves of revolution mark the progress of the conflict. That of 1820 was confined to Portugal, Spain, and Italy; in 1830 France was the chief theatre of revolt; in 1848 France, Germany, and Austria were all involved. In Prussia Frederick William III had promised a constitution as early as 1815, but nothing came of it. Four years later Metternich promulgated the Carlsbad Decrees, somewhat resembling Castlereagh’s Six Acts of the same year, for the suppression of revolutionary ideas, and Prussia remained under an absolutist and reactionary *régime*. Several of the smaller German states, however, had been granted constitutions, and in them alone was any liberty to be found.

The suppression of a Polish revolt against Russia by

the capture of Warsaw in 1831 (the occasion of the famous dispatch 'Order reigns in Warsaw') led the Prussian king, still under Metternich's sway, to tighten still further his hold over his people. Everywhere there was latent rebellion, and particularly amongst the students and professors of the universities. To this period belong several of Germany's national patriotic songs, including Becker's 'German Rhine' and 'The Watch by the Rhine'.

At the same time Prussia prospered considerably during this period from an economic point of view, and her riches increased. An important step in the direction of German unity was the inauguration, between the years 1828 and 1836, of the Zollverein, or German Customs Union. By this means Prussia gradually drew the other states of Germany into commercial alliance with herself, to the detriment of Austria's influence.

On the death of Frederick William III in 1840 great hopes were entertained of the chances of a more liberal *régime* under his successor Frederick William IV. But though he dallied with the idea of a constitution, no real advance was made. Constitutional government, indeed, appears to be as repugnant to the temperament of the Hohenzollerns as it was to our Stuart kings in the seventeenth century. Divine right is an obsession with them as it was with Charles I, and the absence of any real political ability among their people, which they themselves admit, has always prevented the establishment of any real system of representative government.

The new king summoned a United Diet in 1847, but he granted it no legislative powers, and stated clearly that he would never consent to a constitution. His

words in this connexion have become famous : ' I will never allow a sheet of written paper to intervene like a second Providence between our Lord God in Heaven and our country, to rule us by its paragraphs and to put them in the place of ancient loyalty.'

By this time discontent had risen to such a height that the country was ripe for rebellion. ' The train was now laid throughout central Europe ; it needed but a flash from Paris to kindle the fire far and wide ' (Fyffe).

The signal was given from Paris early in 1848, and the flame spread rapidly throughout Germany and Austria. The history of Prussia at this time is largely bound up with that of Austria and the other German states, and is singularly complex and confusing. It was a tumultuous year, but nothing tangible resulted in Germany. All attempts at establishing a united German Empire came to hopeless grief on the three rocks of political incapacity, Austro-Prussian jealousy, and Hohenzollern arrogance. Once more Frederick William IV played with the notion of a constitution, but it was to be one of his own choosing and not the one his people desired. The army, moreover, remained loyal to him, and suppressed the national assembly at his bidding. It seemed, indeed, as if some progress was being made when, early in 1849, the sovereignty of a united Germany was offered to Frederick William, with the title of Emperor, by the German Parliament which had been sitting at Frankfort since May, 1848. But he haughtily refused a ' crown of mud and wood ' from the hands of such a body, and all other attempts at settlement met with a like fate. In the result, all Germany was plunged back into reaction for another ten years. Everywhere the conditions existing before 1848 were restored, and vigorous repression was again

the order of the day. It is true that Metternich had been overthrown and driven into exile, but his principles remained intact. German unity, though its earliest foundations were laid on a commercial base, could only be accomplished by the sword, and the men who were to wield it had not yet arrived.

In the year 1858 King Frederick William IV withdrew from public affairs owing to mental disorder, and handed over the reins to his brother Prince William. As in 1840, so now, the hopes of the nationalists revived. The prince regent summoned a moderately progressive ministry and inaugurated a corresponding policy. His chief care, however, was the army. This numbered at his accession some 130,000 men. But while the population of Prussia had increased from 12,000,000 (in 1814) to 18,000,000, the numbers of the army had remained almost stationary. Consequently the full number of recruits was not summoned to the colours, and, at the same time, their period of service in the active army had been reduced from three years to two. William therefore started by enforcing the universal obligation of service, which meant raising the full number of 63,000 recruits annually instead of only 40,000, and keeping them for the full three years. This brought up the numbers of the active army to nearly 200,000 men. By extending the period of service in the Reserve from two years to four he provided for an army of 440,000 men between the ages of 20 and 27, exclusive of the *Landwehr*.

In 1861 King Frederick William died and the prince regent became king as William I. Next year he summoned to his councils the man who was to accomplish the great task of founding the German Empire, Otto von Bismarck. His policy was concise and simple : Prussia was to rule Germany, and to obtain the leadership by force. Unity

was to be realized, in his own words, 'not by speeches nor by the decisions of a majority, but *by blood and iron*.' In the hands of such a man, with a clear goal before him, undeterred by any moral scruples in his advance towards it, and gifted with consummate diplomatic ability, the sovereigns of Europe were the merest puppets. He played with them one by one as a cat plays with a mouse, and made them each in turn serve his purpose in the attainment of his great end. With the assistance of von Roon, the War Minister, and von Moltke, the chief of the general staff, he employed the newly-reorganized army as his instrument, and forced unity upon the German people by his own particular methods. Three wars were required for the purpose : against Denmark in 1864, Austria in 1866, and France in 1870 ; and they were thoroughly and decisively carried through.

The ostensible cause of the Danish War was the question of the succession in Schleswig-Holstein, two provinces under Danish rule but chiefly German in population. Bismarck's real motive, however, was to destroy the *Bund*, the German Federation of 1815, by going to war on his own account, against the wishes of the Diet. The two provinces were easily crushed by Prussia in temporary alliance with Austria, and as King William was not yet won over to his minister's designs against Austria, a temporary settlement was effected by the Convention of Gastein (1865), by which Holstein was given to Austria and Schleswig to Prussia.

Next year Bismarck negotiated a three-months' alliance with Italy, in order to have her assistance against Austria, and he then proceeded to quarrel with the latter, with the aim of expelling her from the confederation. The southern states allied themselves



with Austria, but the Prussian invasion of Bohemia ended after seven weeks in the complete defeat of the Austrians at Sadowa, and though the Italians were beaten at Custozza the war came speedily to an end. It was settled by the Treaty of Prague that Austria was to withdraw entirely from German affairs. Prussia was to annex the states of Hanover, Hesse-Cassel, and Nassau, which separated the two halves of her dominions, and to form a North German Confederation which the four southern states, Bavaria, Baden, Württemberg, and Hesse-Darmstadt, were to be permitted to join. This they each proceeded to do, by making offensive and defensive alliances with Prussia.

The rising power of Germany was now beginning to threaten the stability of the balance of power in Europe. It was particularly resented by France, who had hitherto been the predominant power on the continent. Bismarck was not at all averse to war, as he saw in it the best means of consolidating the newly-formed union of the German states. From 1867 to 1870 French irritation against Prussia steadily increased, and matters came to a head in the latter year when a prince of the house of Hohenzollern was suggested to fill the vacant Spanish throne. French counsels were singularly divided and uncertain. Gramont, the foreign minister, pressed eagerly for war, while Ollivier, the president of the cabinet, opposed it. Napoleon III himself hesitated and wavered between the two parties. At length Bismarck precipitated matters by publishing the famous telegram from Ems, stating that King William had refused to see the French ambassador, and France declared war on July 19.

The chief events of the Franco-Prussian War may be briefly related. The French forces amounted to some-

thing under 250,000 men, while Prussia had nearly double that number. Both sides wished to take the offensive, but a French invasion of South Germany was soon found to be impossible, owing to the utterly unprepared state of the French army. Early in August the French Army of the Rhine was defeated by the Prussian 1st Army at Forbach-Spicheren, while the Army of Alsace, under MacMahon, was destroyed by the Prussian 3rd Army, under the Crown Prince, at Wörth. Then the three Prussian armies combined to attack the Army of the Rhine, and inflicted on it three defeats in five days, at Borny, Mars-la-Tour, and Gravelotte. The Prussian 1st and 2nd Armies next laid siege to Metz, while the 3rd marched on Châlons. MacMahon attempted to relieve Metz, but was surrounded and forced to capitulate, with the Emperor himself and his whole army, at Sedan (September 2). As a French historian tersely puts it: 'There was no French Army left.' The remainder of the war centred on Paris, which was invested by the Prussian 3rd and 4th Armies on September 19. The 2nd Army remained before Metz, and compelled Bazaine to surrender that city six weeks later. During the winter the French armies of the Loire, of the East, and of the North, were all defeated, and on January 24, 1871, Paris capitulated. A week earlier King William had been crowned Emperor at Versailles. Bismarck insisted on the cession of Alsace and part of Lorraine, the occupation of Paris by the Prussian army until the treaty of peace was ratified (this was only forty-eight hours), and the payment of an indemnity of six milliards of francs (which was reduced to five by the efforts of Thiers). The treaty embodying these terms was finally signed at Frankfort in May.

Negotiations between Prussia and the southern states had been proceeding during the war, so that at its close the German Empire was already established. The new provinces were annexed not to Prussia but to the Empire, and being acquired by conquest they were placed on a different footing from the other members of the confederation, having no self-government and no representation in the *Bundesrath*, or federal council. Bismarck's purpose was thus at length consummated, and Prussia's rule over a united Germany was an accomplished fact.

# WHY WE ARE AT WAR

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## THE MAN OF PEACE<sup>1</sup>

‘Is Germany to blame for the great war?’ I was asked on my return from the Continent but a few days ago, and in reply I asked of my questioner, ‘Why do you value my opinion?’

‘Because’, explained this editor, ‘you are an American, and therefore nationally neutral. You make your living by writing, and appreciate the responsibility and value of words. You have passed the greater part of ten years actually living in every country involved, you speak the languages of most of these countries, you have friends in all of them, and for the past year you have lived in Germany, presumably because you like it best. You ought to have drawn some conclusion that would be interesting at a time when people really want to know who did bring this condition about.’

Ordinarily, when one is asked to express an opinion, he can answer with readiness; but there are times when likings, friendships, associations, memories, all incline him to prejudice, also to reticence. And all of these, in my own case, were favourable to Germany; but I am compelled to admit, after some deliberation, that, as far as I have been able to observe, the evidence against Germany’s intention, participation, and final action will necessitate some more convincing proof than she has yet offered to persuade the world of her guiltlessness.

<sup>1</sup> Published (in an abridged form) in the *Contemporary Review* for December 1914, and now reprinted by permission of the editor.

It is a sweeping question to ask, 'Is Germany to blame for the war?' because that might involve all who live in that splendid country, and as one must define himself before answering, I can do no better than to quote from an article I wrote at the time when the Zabern incident was occupying some public attention. It was relative to the sabring of a troublesome cobbler by a mere stripping of a German officer, indignation in France over the misfortunes of Alsace-Lorraine, protests from Zabern civil authorities, and a somewhat bold and flagrant upholding of military authority as opposed to civil authority by a no less august person than the Kaiser himself. This is what I wrote :

There is a vast difference in speaking of Germany, and the United States, England, or France, as the case might be ; for when we speak of Democratic nations we speak of the whole people, praise the whole people when we admire their achievements, or arraign the whole people when we condemn their misdeeds. Regardless of all protestations, claims to freedom of speech and action, pretence at popular government, and liberty of popular will, there is not, nor ever has been since Roman days, a more centralized and possibly autocratic government than that impressed upon and patiently endured by these same German people. Price Collier, that thoughtful and competent observer, did not exaggerate when he made it plain that, constitutionally and otherwise, the German government actually consists of and exists in the Kaiser. The common people merely play at politics for local wants, unimportant laws and the conduct of small affairs. In any great national policy neither they nor their leaders have any more influence than so many well-meaning, nicely-garbed, and well-regulated wooden men. The Kaiser can over-rule them all. Furthermore, he could literally cancel the government itself, if he so wished, by force of arms. It is not, therefore,

the common German people, that friendly, industrious, patient, obedient mass, who are to be blamed for upholding the sabring of a boisterous citizen who doubtless should have been admonished and perhaps fined the price of a pair of half-soles for disorderly conduct. It seems to me the veriest bosh, also, to lay any of the blame for stimulating militarism upon the so-called military clique, for it must be remembered that, right or wrong, William the Second is one of the strongest men that Germany has thus far produced. A man who could make that grim old giant, Bismarck, walk the plank is not likely to be swayed one way or the other in his judgements by his advisers, those around him, or the somewhat vociferous shouts of Socialists claiming to represent the majority of his people. It is his individual will alone that rules, and it is his individual decision alone that is responsible for whatever of good or misfortune that may happen. In this case he has effectively accomplished two objects—shown contempt for France and French opinion, and made the military authorities supreme.

It is useless to deny that in military circles there was a vast faith in German arms. That has always been so since I had any knowledge of the country and friendship with German officers. It was natural for them to be proud of their service. It is a poor officer, in any service, who does not have pride in his work. Sometimes that military pride caused one from other lands to ruffle a trifle, and then to think what could be the eventual outcome of such pride. A man cannot store his cellar with dynamite, adding to the supply year in and year out, without some day causing an explosion, and neither can a ruler, though he constantly proclaim his peaceful intentions, persistently instil into the minds of a great body of men that they can whip the earth without some day finding that they want to make the attempt.

More than a year ago, in a conversation with a friend

of mine, an officer in the army, he derided what he called 'slipshod' American methods.

'It is fortunate for you people', he said, 'that you have never come into conflict with a first-class Power; but when you do, you will learn what organization is capable of doing. For instance, do you Americans believe, for a minute even, that we shall submit to your Monroe doctrine when the time comes for an issue?'

'I can't see how you could help yourselves,' I replied good-naturedly.

He laughed, as at a joke.

'Our navy', he asserted, 'is already stronger than yours. Your army is not worth consideration. Ours is perfect. And what is more, we have the ships to transport it, and to land it on your coasts. We know where and how. We know where our men would camp each night, and where they would fight the campaign. You think this is a joke?'

I so assured him, but since then have learned enough to convince me that probably the German war bureau knows as much about our fortifications, harbours, mines, railways, public roads, vital interior points, topography, and actual fighting strength as we do ourselves. Also, since then I have learned, from conversations with numerous men of affairs, how tenaciously Germany would cling to commercial control of South America, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that this might, almost by sheer accident, necessitate other dominion, and, consequently, a conflict with us over that time-honoured doctrine of President Monroe.

This is given as but one illustration of Germany's military confidence, a confidence which, coming from, instilled by, and believed in by the Kaiser, may have something to do with this present war. It was the confidence of the most



marvellously prepared war organization that the world has ever seen called into being, and that should be considered as a motive of this war.

As far back as 1908 Germany was expending four millions of dollars, annually, in its espionage system alone. There were, I was told by a French official, more than thirty thousand men in France alone, stationed as workmen, shop- and hotel-keepers, and realty agents, ready to act on signal. Among the duties of these men would be the destruction of bridges, to hamper French mobilization, and to blow up the main arsenal. This same official told me that, some five months ago, the French secret service discovered the key to these preparations and was appalled by its thoroughness. It held a consultation, and made a counter-move by setting a spy to watch each of the German spies, but permitted the latter to continue operations, on the principle that it was easier to observe a known enemy than to discover a new one. A week before war was declared, the Germans who were to perform destructive tasks were tapped on the shoulders at midnight, and arrested, and the mining beneath the great arsenal was removed and destroyed.

Antwerp, Brussels, and London have since discovered that Germany had nests of agents organized along the same lines. One German church in London has been found, since war broke out, to have been for a long time a considerable arsenal for German rifles. These are some of the points to be regarded when it is asserted that Germany confined herself only to measures for self-protection and desired only peace. Straws blown by the wind, some forgotten sage has said, indicate which way it blows; and here are some of the straws that I have personally observed flying, although, with remarkable

stupidity, I did not at the time observe their trend, until the violence of their flight would have shocked a blind man.

It was told me in March, of this year, by one who is almost as great a military editor as there is in the 'Fatherland', that the completion of the improved Kiel canal was the very last act that possibly could be effected in 'preparedness'.

'From now onward', declared this man, 'Germany needs nothing more than the natural increase in her navy, and maintenance of her efficiency in arms. At present we are probably armed better than any other nation in the world. We have adequate reasons for confidence that this is so. Our military railways are now perfected.'

It did not dawn on me at that time that usually, when a man's preparations to do something have been perfected, he finds a way to go ahead and do that thing of which he has dreamed and for which he has prepared. I did observe, however, that scattered over Germany were more of those wonderful 'switch' or 'shunting' yards, capable of entraining tens of thousands of soldiers in a few hours—yards where from ten to twenty passenger trains could be drawn up at one time, and oddly enough, some of these queer yards, all equipped with electric lighting plants, are out in places where there are not a dozen houses in sight. In some of these yards, located at central points for rural mobilization, one saw long trains of troop cars, dingy, empty, stodgily waiting for use in war, if one ever came. I was told of one test mobilization (in reply to my query as to why I had seen so many troops pass through a small place one evening), where twenty thousand men were assembled at ten o'clock one morning, made a camp complete, were reviewed, entrained, detrained, and just seven hours later

there was nothing save débris and trampled grass to show that the place had ever been disturbed.

The spring and summer of this year saw manœuvres and test mobilizations on an unprecedented scale. We who lived in Germany and were sufficiently familiar with it to note this increased activity, regarded it as nothing more than a natural desire on the part of the Kaiser and his war staff to see how efficiently his war units could all be welded together. The press, stoppered and controlled more or less, paid no more than ordinary attention to these movements; but I was told by three different officers that for the first time it had been proved that the entire military force of Germany had at last reached as near to actual perfection as could ever be hoped for. And two of these men, at least, are thoughtful, conservative men, given to no boasting, and speaking merely as professional men proud of their work.

It will be remembered, also, that it was this summer which saw the perfection of the Kiel canal, presumably the perfection of the Heligoland fortifications, and the actual tests of the two largest steamships the world has ever known, the *Vaterland* and the *Imperator*, thus making German transportation facilities among the best equipped in existence. Hence, from the foregoing, it may be concluded that Germany considered herself at the acme of strength for offence or defence.

There were on every hand, this summer, signs of this super-excellence. At a mere 'Tank-station' below Kriesingen, on June 12, I saw probably seventy-five or a hundred locomotives (I had time to count more than seventy), most of which were of antiquated type—obsolete as far as the demands of up-to-date traffic are concerned—and of a kind that would have been 'scrapped' in either England or America. Yet these

were all being cared for and 'doctored up'. A few engineers and stokers worked round them, and I saw them run one down a long track and bring it back to another, whereupon hostlers at once began drawing its fires, and the engineer and stoker<sup>1</sup> crossed over and climbed into another cab.

'What do you suppose they are doing that for?' I asked one of the train men with whom I had struck up an acquaintance.

'Why,' replied he with perfect frankness, 'those are war locomotives.'

Reading the look of bewilderment on my face, he added, 'You see, those engines are no longer good enough for heavy or fast traffic, so as soon as they become obsolete we send them to the reserve. They are all of them good enough to move troop trains, and therefore are never destroyed. They are all frequently fired up and tested in regular turn. Those fellows out there do nothing else. That is their business, just keeping those engines in order and fit for troop duty. There are dozens of such *dépôts* over Germany.'

'But how on earth could you man them in case of war?—where would you get the engineers for so many extras?'

He smiled pityingly at my ignorance.

'The head-quarters know to the ton what each one of those can pull, how fast, where the troop cars are that it will pull; and every man that would ride behind one has the number of the car he would ride in, and for every so many men there is waiting somewhere a reserve engineer and stoker. The best locomotives would be the first out of the reserve, and so on down to the ones that can barely do fifteen kilometres per hour.'

Since that June day, Germany has proved how faith-

fully those thousands of reserve locomotives over her domain have been nursed and cared for, and how quickly those who were to man and ride behind them could respond.

At this point, almost as I write, I had something explained to me over which I have at times puzzled for months. On February 14 of this year I was in Cologne, and blundered; where I had no business, into what I learned was a military-stores yard. Among other curious things were tiny locomotives loaded on flats which could be run off those cars by an ingenious contrivance of metals, or, as we call them in America, rails. Also there were other flats loaded with sections of tracks fastened on cup ties (sleepers that can be laid on the surface of the earth) and sections of miniature bridges on other flats. I saw how it was possible to lay a line of temporary railway, including bridges, almost anywhere in an incredibly short space of time, if one had the men. At one period of my life I was actively interested in railway construction, but had never before seen anything like this. Before I could conclude my examination I discovered that I was on *verboden* ground, and had to leave; but the official who directed me out told me that what I had seen were construction outfits. The more I thought of those, afterwards, the more I was puzzled by the absence of dump cars, and that mass of smaller paraphernalia to which I had been accustomed in all the contracting work I had ever seen. Yet I had to remember with admiration the ingenuity of the outfit, and think of how quickly it could all be laid, transferred, re-shipped, or stored. Here before me, in a letter received from Holland but yesterday, which comes from a Hollander who was a refugee in Germany, and on August 30



reached home after trying experiences, is the following :

Never, I believe, did a country so thoroughly get ready for war. I saw the oddest spectacle, the building of a railway behind a battle-field. They had diminutive little engines and rails in sections, so they could be bolted together, and even bridges that could be put across ravines in a twinkling. Flat cars that could be carried by hand and dropped on the rails, great strings of them. Up to the nearest point of battle came, on the regular railway, this small one. At the point where we were, it came up against the soldiers. It seemed to me that hundreds of men had been trained for this task, for in but a few minutes that small portable train was buzzing backward and forward on its own small portable rails, distributing food and supplies. It was great work, I can tell you. I've an idea that in time of battle it would be possible for those sturdy little trains to shift troops to critical or endangered points at the rate of perhaps twenty miles an hour, keep ammunition, batteries, &c., moving at the same rate and, of course, be of inestimable use in clearing off the wounded. A portable railway for a battle-field struck me as coming about as close to making war by machinery as anything I have ever heard of. I did not have a chance, however, to see it working under fire, for, being practically a prisoner, I was hurried onward and away from the scene.

I know of nothing more than this, coming from one whom I know to be truthful, that so adequately shows how even ingenious details had been worked out for military perfection. We shall doubtless hear, after this war is over, how well those field trains performed their work when it came to shifting troops in times of fierce pressure on a threatened point, and how it added to German efficacy.

The reader will perhaps ask by this time, ' What

has all this to do with responsibility for the war ? ' I answer, ' When the reader was a boy and by various efforts and privations saved money enough to buy a box of tools, did he lock them up in the garret, or bury them in the cellar ? When he possessed a fine bright Billy Barlow pocket-knife, did he whittle with it ? '

However, this is not an argumentative thesis, and a good witness confines himself to what he personally considers relative, and to personal events that may or may not be regarded as significant. I hold no brief one way or the other.

The evening of Sunday, June 28, in Berlin was warm, somnolent, and peaceful. With some friends I had been at Luna Park in Berlin, and we loitered slowly out of the gates and up the street before separating. Suddenly, as we approached the corner across the viaduct, we encountered small crowds collecting in front of the newspaper offices, and there saw bulletins announcing the assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand and his wife, the Duchess of Hohenberg, in the streets of Sarajevo. We were shocked far more, I believe, than any of those stolid Germans who elbowed us to read the news. We Americans have, unfortunately, too much knowledge of what assassination in high places means. By the time I reached the hotel where I was living 'extras' were out, but the news was not received with any more interest by the people in the streets, loitering homeward from places of amusement, or seated in the splendid open-air cafés of Berlin, than would be given to the murder of any other distinguished foreigners. Here and there some of the more widely-read or travelled expressed sympathy for the aged Austrian emperor, who has so repeatedly suffered in a long and prominent life. I doubt not that extras in

New York announcing the same news would have had a far larger sale. Also, I am certain that the German people regarded it as none of their business, and passed it by. Days later came the news, in regular editions, that the Kaiser was hurrying homeward, and that regattas, and friendly sea visits, were being abandoned or brought to a close. It was publicly announced that the reason of the Kaiser's return was grief for a lost friend, and the stories, having a human note, aroused a sudden thrill of interest; but, strangely enough, he began a consultation with his war advisers. This latter was a generally accepted fact in Berlin, but the people may have regarded it as his natural way of manifesting grief, or, to be more kindly, habit or routine.

In the newspapers of the next few days the Austrian incident became subsidiary, and great stress was laid on the Ulster situation in Ireland, and editorial writers appeared to think that Great Britain was on the extreme brink of civil war. Then came the surprising news that Austria regarded the assassination of the heirs to the throne—in reality, as far as unbiased observers can see, the crime of a Bosnian schoolboy—as a great Servian plot. The world knows how Austria insisted on this, and how, of a sudden, she made demands that would have for ever ended Servia's independence as a nation. The world also is well aware that it would have been possible for the Kaiser, grief-stricken, surrounded by his military advisers, with direct means of communication with Austria, to have personally urged that abrupt and uncompromising Austrian ultimatum. There is not the slightest doubt that, whether he forced that ultimatum or not, he was in constant communication. The newspapers tacitly said so.

Immediately after this came what should have been

a plain warning that the Kaiser meant to go to war; for, of a sudden, and a most significant incident, too, the streets of apathetic, pleasure-seeking Berlin were flooded with extra newspapers from the notoriously Kaiser-controlled press, working up sympathy for Austria, vaguely hinting that it was Germany's business to support Austria in every way, and incidentally expressing grave fears that Russia might morally support Servia. If Berlin had not taken sufficient interest before, she was now being systematically aroused. These 'extras' were passed out gratis, in frequent series, by tens of thousands. Men drove along the kerbs in automobiles and passed them out. The streets were littered with them. I asked for one, tried to pay for it, and was told it was free. It astonished me, because it was the first time I had ever witnessed such prodigal generosity, it having been my experience that it costs money to issue enormous editions of extras, and also hitherto I had supposed that 'extras' were printed to be sold, not given away. I wonder who paid for them! If no one did, there are newspaper proprietors in Berlin who merit monuments for philanthropy, after they are dead and the bankruptcy proceedings are concluded.

In a steady, well-defined, and constant crescendo the journals made references to the duties of the Fatherland and to her naval and military strength, with now and then an adroit paragraph relative to the bounden duty of the German to cling closely to his Austrian brother, lest the latter be bruised and crushed beneath a threatening Slavic heel. From apathy the German awoke to keen interest. A nation that had been taking its afternoon nap awoke, yawned, stretched itself, sat up, got to its feet and became angry. Let us not be

unjust ! The great mass of German people have a sense of justice as well as of duty, and they are loyal to their friends. They were told that if Russia interfered, it was a rank injustice to the Austrians, and that the Austrians were friends, allies and partners. Likewise, their press educated them in a fortnight to regard Russia as a threatening, mongrel bully, who should be told to stand off. Furthermore, that the bully would stand off, because Russia at that moment was in the process of reorganizing her army, and dared do nothing more than bluff.

There can be not the slightest possible doubt that those 'extras', so benevolently passed out, kindled a war-flame in Berlin ; and non-partisan observers are convinced that their publication and distribution were directed from the palace. Nobody familiar with Austria, and having knowledge of that weary, peace-desiring old man, Franz-Josef, believes for one moment that Austria either sought, or would have gone to war with Servia on such a slight investigation of the assassinations, had not some one influenced, or perhaps forced her to such issue. The Austrians are not such fools. They knew too well that they must eventually show the world sufficient grounds for such action, and that mere lame assertions that they '*thought* the crimes were plotted in Servia' would not justify them in the minds of humanity. True, Austria desired to put a check on Servia and Servian aspirations, but this she could have accomplished in a dozen other and peaceful ways. But this is a digression in a witness, and must therefore be taken as nothing more than an opinion.

The fact is certain that war-talk had become common in Berlin when, on July 9, I went to Hamburg ; yet this was fourteen days prior to the Austrian ultimatum to



Servia. I was there for seven days, and the only expressions I heard were apprehensive and regretful. The people of Hamburg wanted no war. They are a fine people, those Hamburgers; industrious, sober, hospitable, and filled with civic pride. Unlike the Berliner, already lashed to emotional martialism, they had no wish to interfere; but in Hamburg again the newspapers were being filled with articles that could scarcely be regarded as pacifying. Whether 'influenced' or not, the truth of which we shall probably never know, already they too were strumming the harsh song of war in unison with all the press of Prussia.

On my return to Berlin, a man whose name I dare not mention, lest some time it cause him trouble, a very competent man, who is known even in America, told me he feared that 'we are on the verge of a very terrible war'. Pressed for explanation he said, 'My friend, I must not say a word more; but in a short time I am sure you will remember my prediction.'

I have not seen him since; for on the following day he was ordered away on a mission unknown to me, and I had nothing but a card so telling me, and ending with his gracious 'Good-bye'. Am I to account for his prediction by crediting him with the rare gift of 'second-sight', or is it more convincing to remember that he was one of the cogs in that enormous and powerful wheel revolving around the general war-staff of Germany?

On Saturday, July 18, suffering from an attack of hay-fever, I went to Swinemünde, a fortified point on the Baltic, and found it filled with restless, excited people who talked of nothing but a prospective big war. No one could give any convincing authority; but all seemed confident that in the event of war Russia would have to back down, because she was in the midst of reorganizing

her army, Great Britain dare not engage, lest she have civil war over Home Rule, and France was impotent. Thus, already were the masses of the people discussing possibilities that they would have been ignorant of had not the carefully-manipulated press-work been well done. That same night, July 18, the offing filled with torpedo boats and destroyers, ostensibly for a mimic attack on the fortifications, that had already been closed to the public, and all night long the flashlights played and the guns banged in rest-disturbing volume. Sunday, there was great activity at the wharves leading up the channel that is one of the water highways to Stettin. Sentries kept the over-curious from encroaching on the scene of activities, but I saw men working at the torpedo tubes. War aeroplanes appeared and made trial flights over the city and harbour. I sometimes carry with me a sketch-book, although I am no artist, and while merely drawing an old lighthouse on the end of one of the moles found a man looking over my shoulder, and, reading menace in his attitude, tore it up and walked away. I remembered, later, that he had sauntered after me to my hotel.

It seems, in writing an article like this, an extreme weakness to fail to give names of persons; but there must be loyalty preserved to those who give us friendly warnings, so again I am compelled to obscurity in what follows; for there is not a country in the world, not even excepting Russia, where a ruler's arm is so long and wrathful and his fist is so potent as is the Kaiser's. I doubt not that if I were to mention names in this article, those friends of mine would be punished as soon as His Majesty gets around to it, so I say 'a certain person' that night came to my hotel, in civilian garb, and said, 'Take my advice, but don't ask questions that I cannot answer. You go back to Berlin in the morning,

pack your grips, and get out of Germany while there is time.'

'Those sketches?' I laughed.

But he had heard nothing of my movements, and said, 'No, not on that account; but get away from Germany.'

'I think I'll go to France,' I said, convinced that there was more in his words than could be understood on the surface.

'Why not Switzerland?' he asked. 'It's a fine place for hay-fever.'

It is needless to say that I was in Berlin and packing on the following day, that immediately after I did go to Switzerland, and that still there was no open declaration of war on Germany's part. I stopped at Basle for a while, interested in that fine frontier station, and one day was amused by the extremely expressive swearing of a man who I found out was a 'switchman' in the yards. He was complaining of over-work.

'One might have an idea', he growled, 'that Germany was going to war, from the way the German railways are ordering all their empty trucks returned from everywhere. Nothing but empties going home, and if anybody makes a mistake or overlooks one, there's the devil to pay!'

I have since learned that this inflow of empty German carriages and trucks was so observable at other frontier stations, that two weeks before war was declared the German yards were swamped with this excess.

On Tuesday, July 28, the day when Austria declared war on Servia, German officers stopping at Swiss hotels received peremptory telegrams ordering them to cut their vacations then and there, and return home at once. From a hotel where I stopped in the Bernese Oberland, forty Germans left on July 29, the recall of the officers

being sufficient to warn the wise that war was momentarily expected ; and something like an orderly panic ensued. Here is another point that should be noted, which is, that had these officers been recalled from some other point—say Geneva, for instance—they would have been more careful to conceal their telegraphic orders ; but the Bernese part of Switzerland is almost as German as Germany, and no one thought of reticence. The current talk was frank, open, and discussion and prediction uncurbed. There was no attempt to conceal a great satisfaction. The French had not been drawn into war by the rank outrages in Zabern, where a smart young lieutenant had been boldly upheld by the Kaiser for sabring a poor cobbler, nor had the French given sufficient ground for offensive action when the Kaiser had somewhat arrogantly upheld the rule of the sword over the unfortunate Frenchmen in Alsace. At that time German officers had frankly and confessedly hoped that there would be an excuse for war with France, but had been disappointed. Now, in these latter days of July, hastening back in obedience to telegraphic orders, they exultantly declared that the time had come when Germany would show how easily she could march to Paris. They departed as men going to their holidays instead of having them cut short. They had no doubt, apparently, that a pretext for a war with France, that must of course be a war of conquest, was now forthcoming. The Russian situation alone warranted such conjecture they declared, although Russia had but begun precautionary mobilization ; but at Russia these officers snapped their fingers. They cared nothing for war with Russia, only so that it might afford a chance to mulct the French. Not one of them but scoffed at the idea that Great Britain would go to war. They partook of the views which their



Kaiser must have maintained, and on which he made his great plunge, that England had her hands full at home; that an ultimatum to Russia, who had only attempted to mediate for the Serbs, would bring something approaching a state of war with the Czar, and then, by the next adroit pressure, France could be forced into conflict. If any one still doubts the Kaiser's ability as a great chess-player, let him consider that Russia still tried to be friendly, that England was doing all she could for peace, that the French were remaining quiet, and doing all they could to remain so, and that the Kaiser was actually mobilizing. Also, it is a matter of record that he announced himself as peaceful. One must be just, and he did say that he hoped for nothing so much as peace. The French reticence was disturbing. The German Chancellor was vastly worried by the fear that France, too, might mobilize, which would naturally be an unthinkable crime. So the Kaiser, to use an Americanism, asked France what she proposed to do about it, and, still receiving no reply that justified a declaration of war, went to war without one! If it is true, as the German Chancellor says, that the reason why the enormous German war machine, the most perfect, the most carefully created since time began, was set in motion and neutral Luxembourg and neutral Belgium flooded with German troops because Germany was afraid that Great Britain (unmobilized, and trying to mediate) and France (actually dreading war) were about to throw enormous numbers of men into Belgium, then the Kaiser will still go down to history as the Man of Peace. For it would admittedly have been a very unfair thing for Great Britain to throw into France millions of men—how, nobody knows—and France, not then mobilized, to add her millions so unexpectedly in that *coup de force*. But



if it was merely an unfounded panic on the part of Germany, Germany is to be pitied for her nervous malady.

What I personally know can be summarized as a number of events, insignificant when taken singly, but in the cumulative to me, at least, impressive.

First : That not until this very year were German military and naval preparations complete.

Second : that the Zabern ' incident ' was, in effect, and perhaps intentionally so, a challenge to France.

Third : That the establishment of ' Operatives ' in friendly foreign countries disproved any peaceful intention.

Fourth : That the Austrian-Servian imbroglio was not in itself sufficient cause for Germany to go to war, had she not been prepared and eager.

Fifth : That it was well known in inner and upper circles that the military clique hoped for war, and wanted nothing more than a pretext.

Sixth : That the war spirit was kindled and stimulated by *freely distributed* newspapers.

Seventh : That Germany was making ready for war days before the situation warranted the supposition that she was in any wise involved.

Eighth : That days before such situation arrived, many of her trusted officials had been quietly warned that war was coming.

I cannot personally conclude, therefore, after considering all these little corroborative happenings with what has since taken place, a review of the Kaiser's successive steps, with which the public is familiar, and his sudden descent on Belgium, that any other than the Kaiser himself could have been to blame.



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# FIGHTING A PHILOSOPHY

## I

SOME people who profess to know Germany well are trying to make out that the temper of the ruling caste has not been influenced in any considerable degree by Friedrich Nietzsche. They point out that Treitschke, whose influence has certainly been enormous, would have nothing to say to Nietzsche, whom he trenchantly described as 'a madman, bitten to the marrow by the *folie des grandeurs*'. They prove that Nietzsche repaid the Professor's contempt with interest. They show without difficulty that Nietzsche's writings abound in sentiments which cannot be pleasing in high quarters, that he was no flatterer of the Hohenzollerns, and that he even, on occasion, criticized the German character and culture and disparaged the State. How, they ask, can the author of such heresies, the man who claimed the title of 'Good European' in contradistinction to Prussian Patriot, be thought to have inspired the makers of the present war?

If we take the 'ruling caste' in a strict and narrow sense, it is very likely true that its members are not much addicted to the study of Nietzsche. One cannot imagine the Kaiser, for instance, giving his days and nights to *Zarathustra*. Nevertheless the exact agreement between the precepts of Nietzsche and the policy and practice of Germany cannot possibly be a matter of chance. There is not a move of modern Prussian statecraft, not an action of the German army since the

outbreak of the war, that could not be justified by scores of texts from the Nietzschean scriptures. In many cases, no doubt, it would also be possible to find texts of an opposite tendency ; for few philosophical rhapsodists have been more fertile than Nietzsche in self-contradictions. But the dominant ideas of his philosophy, the ideas most frequently and emphatically expressed,—the ideas, in a word, that get home to the mind of nine readers out of ten—are precisely those which might be water-marked on the protocol-paper of German diplomacy and embroidered on the banners of German militarism.<sup>1</sup> This is certainly no mere coincidence.

It is no doubt the case that, among active politicians, Treitschke has had much more direct influence than Nietzsche. Moreover it would be an error to regard either writer as a true originator of the ideas associated with his name. They are not the causes, but rather the most conspicuous symptoms, of the modern German temper. They are co-ordinate effects of that great disaster to civilization, the war of 1870. The German people were ' overtaken ', as our forefathers used to say, with the inebriation of victory, and the writings of the two German-Poles reek of its fumes. Each in his own way—the one with an imposing air of stolid sanity, the other with a freakish emphasis of insanity that for some time hindered his acceptance—they constructed a theoretical justification of the practical example of triumphant force that had startled and fascinated the world. Bismarck is the true author, no less of Nietzsche's philosophy, than of Treitschke's history. Nietzsche, of

<sup>1</sup> Bernhardt's notorious *Germany and the next War* bears on its title-page the motto from Nietzsche: ' War and courage have done greater things than love of one's neighbour. Not your pity but your bravery has hitherto saved the unfortunate.'

course, would have denied it with imprecations, but it is none the less true. Treitschke more or less consciously, and Nietzsche more or less unconsciously, gave articulate voice to the colossal swagger in stone and bronze with which the record of 1870 is written all over Germany.

Owing to the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine—as to which even Bismarck had misgivings—it became a political necessity to perpetuate and live up to the gospel of power. The present war is the logical outcome of the material and spiritual forces set in motion in 1871; and Nietzsche, more or less unconsciously I repeat, has provided for the average, intelligent, uncritical public—the Culture-Philistines as he himself called them—a philosophic justification of the spiritual development. That is where his direct influence is surely unmistakeable. The ruling caste troubles little about philosophic justification; but the average man hugs to his heart the philosopher's violently dogmatic asseverations, in semi-biblical rhythms, that force, rapacity, unscrupulousness, pitilessness, are indispensable parts of the higher ethics of the future. By proving that conscience, as a whole, is a despicable survival of 'slave morality', Nietzsche offers a potent anodyne to uneasy consciences. Is it to be doubted that millions of Germans<sup>1</sup> have recourse to this soothing drug when some trait of political or military 'master morality' affects them with a momentary qualm?

It may be argued that the Germans who enlist Nietzsche on the side of Prussian Imperialism flagrantly misread him. That is possible; but the trouble is that no human being can say how he is to be read aright.

<sup>1</sup> Nietzsche's works have had an enormous sale during the past twenty years, and the influence of his trenchant phrases of course extends far beyond the circle of those who have actually studied his works.

To extract a coherent system from his contradictions is impossible. He recklessly flung forth wave upon wave of thought : those waves which were tuned to harmony with the prevailing vibrations of the national spirit carried their message far and wide ; those which were not keyed to the right pitch were idly dissipated in space. Wherever his ideas are clear, definite, and easily translated into action, they are aggressively inhuman ; wherever they stray in the direction of humanity (as, for instance, in the conception of a united Europe), they are vague, visionary, and irreconcilable with the general trend of his doctrine.

‘ Shall I prove to you ’, says Dr. Oscar Levy, who seems to be accepted by the English Nietzscheans as little less than a reincarnation of the master spirit, ‘ Shall I prove to you that a new philosophy may be a more powerful enemy than all the navies in the world ? ’ The proof is now being attempted on a world-wide scale. Whether it will reach its Q.E.D. remains to be seen ; but if not the most powerful thing on earth, the Nietzschean philosophy is certainly one of the most redoubtable.

Dr. Levy wrote in 1906. Gerhart Hauptmann, in 1914, boasts that *Zarathustra* is one of the classics which the cultured German soldier carries in his knapsack—the others being Homer, *Faust*, and the Bible. To judge by results, we may say with confidence ‘ The greatest of these is *Zarathustra* ’.

## II

Let me now show by a few quotations how strong is Nietzsche’s claim to a posthumous Iron Cross of the first class, as the inspired apologist and eulogist in advance of Germany’s assault upon all that the non-Nietzschean understands as civilization. My quotations shall be

chosen from the four works of his complete maturity—written at a time when his ideas had attained their full development, yet before any unmistakeable symptoms of insanity had set in. They are *The Joyful Wisdom*, *Thus spake Zarathustra*, *Beyond Good and Evil*, and *The Genealogy of Morals*. As Nietzsche seldom pursued a sustained argument, but chose rather to write in staccato aphorisms, he suffers less than almost any other author by the detachment of quotations from their context. In no case, so far as I am aware, does the context of the following passages modify their meaning in any favourable sense. From other portions of his writings, inconsistent and even contradictory passages might no doubt be selected ; but, as I have already pointed out, they are far vaguer, far feebler, far less characteristic. It may safely be asserted that the Nietzschean thought-germs which inhere and rankle are those which are barbed with inhumanity.

If we look for the key-note of the whole war, where shall we find it but in this aphorism :

The time for petty politics is past : next century <sup>1</sup> will bring the struggle for World-Dominion—the compulsion to great politics. (*Beyond Good and Evil*, § 208.)

It is perhaps worth noting that the term rendered ‘ World-Dominion ’ is not ‘ Welt-Herrschaft ’, which might be taken in a more or less figurative sense, but ‘ Erd-Herrschaft ’, dominion over the earth or globe.<sup>2</sup> Can it be doubted that such a philosophic-historic

<sup>1</sup> Written in the eighteen-eighties.

<sup>2</sup> In another place Nietzsche writes : ‘ The refrain of my practical philosophy is, “ Who is to be master of the world ? ” ’—and this phrase is taken by one of his English disciples as the title of a book expounding the Zarathustrian gospel.



prophecy, reverberated a thousandfold during the past twenty years, is calculated to bring about its own fulfilment, and that millions of minds in Germany have been steeped in the idea that their racial mission was, in the next war, to secure such a rearrangement of the world

As should to all their days and nights to come  
Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom ?

Now let us look for the moral arguments whereby it is declared not only permissible but imperative to inflict any amount of agony upon mankind in pursuit of your self-aggrandizement, or, more technically, in gratification of your Will to Power. Here a dual principle is invoked : first, that what moralists have pusillanimously called ' evil ' is just as necessary a factor in evolution as what they have called ' good ' ; second, that ' good ' and ' evil ' are mere question-begging terms, cunningly employed by groups of men in order to prejudice other groups of men, whose Will to Power runs counter to their own. The following are a few of the numberless passages in which these ideas are developed :

Hatred, mischievousness, rapacity, love of domination, and whatever else is called evil, belong to the astounding economy of race-conservation—a costly, wasteful, very foolish economy, indeed, but *demonstrably* one which has hitherto conserved our species. (*The Joyful Wisdom*, § 1.)

According to this [the English] theory, the term ' good ' is applied to whatever tends to race-conservation, the term ' evil ' to whatever tends in the opposite direction. But in truth the evil impulses are just as expedient, race-conserving and indispensable as the good—only their method of action is different. (*The Joyful Wisdom*, § 4.)

It may seem incredible that such transparent sophistries should for a moment impose on intelligent people ;

but that they have done and still do so is unfortunately beyond dispute. The idea is expanded in the following passages :

We . . . believe that [man's] Will to Life had to be intensified into unconditional Will to Power : we hold that hardness, violence, slavery, danger in the street and in the heart, secrecy, stoicism, arts of temptation and devilry of all kinds : that everything evil, terrible, tyrannical, wild-beast-like and serpent-like in man, contributes to the elevation of the species ' man ' just as much as its opposite—and in saying this we do not even say enough. (*Beyond Good and Evil*, § 44.)

To refrain from mutual injury, from violence, from exploitation, to reduce one's will to a level with that of others ; this may, in a certain rough sense, be reckoned as good conduct between individuals when the necessary conditions are present (that is to say, an actual similarity in strength and worth, and a participation in some common citizenship). But as soon as an attempt is made to carry this principle further, and even to find in it *the fundamental principle of society*, it discloses itself as what it is—namely, a Will to the *denial* of life, a principle of dissolution and decay. Here one must . . . resist all sentimental weakness : life is *in its essence* appropriation, injury, the overpowering of whatever is foreign to us and weaker than ourselves, suppression, hardness, the forcing upon others of our own forms, the incorporation of others, or, at the very least and mildest, their exploitation. (*Beyond Good and Evil*, § 259.)

Verily, even for what is evil there is still a future ! And the hottest south hath not yet been discovered for man.

How much passes now for the height of evil that is only twelve shoes broad and three months long ! But one day mightier dragons will come into the world.

For in order that the Superman may not lack his dragon, the Superdragon that is worthy of him, much hot sunshine must blaze over the reeking jungle !

Out of your wild cats tigers must grow and crocodiles

out of your poison-toads : for the good hunter shall have a good hunt.

And verily, ye good and just ! much in you is laughable, and most of all your fear of what hath hitherto been called ' devil ' !

. . . . .

This is my doubt regarding you, and the source of my secret mirth : I guess that you will call my Superman—devil ! (*Zarathustra* : ' Of Human Shrewdness '.)

The dear sympathetic soul wishes to help, and gives no thought to the fact that misfortune is a personal necessity : that, both for me and you, terror, renunciation, impoverishment, sleepless nights, adventures, perils and mistakes are as necessary as their opposites, and that even, to put it mystically, the path to one's own heaven always leads through the raptures of one's own hell. (*The Joyful Wisdom*, § 338.)

If these reflections had been jotted on the tablets of a philosophic Tartar in the camp of Tamburlaine they need have occasioned no surprise ; but in fact they are addressed by an ex-professor of philology, at the end of the nineteenth century, to a people which boasts itself the most cultured in the world. Is it possible to ignore the direct relation between them and the bludgeoning of Belgium, to look no further in the German programme ? How many Germans, I wonder, have soothed the pricks of conscience with this satanic optimism, and told themselves that Belgium's path to heaven lay through the raptures (*Wollust*) of Louvain, Malines, and Aerschot ? That Nietzsche was sincere, in his brainsick fashion, there can be no doubt : but the moment you think of applying such principles in justification of actual deeds of brutality, they have a sickening air of cant whereof one would imagine that even the German mind could not be wholly unconscious.

Now for a passage in which it is proved that ' good '

and 'evil' are exactly the same thing, viewed from the standpoint of masters and slaves respectively, the 'evil' of the humble and downtrodden being the 'good' of the proud and domineering :

How different is the sense of the two words 'bad' (*schlecht*) and 'evil' (*böse*)! They are both apparently opposed to the same idea, 'good': but *not* to the same conception of good. Let us ask ourselves who is actually the 'evil' man, from the point of view of the resentment morality [the morality of the slaves]? To answer in all strictness: it is precisely the 'good' man of the other morality, precisely the noble, the powerful, the dominating man, but reversely coloured, reversely interpreted, reversely regarded by the envenomed eye of resentment. Let us in nowise deny that he who learns to know these 'good' men only as enemies, learns to know only *evil enemies*. Those very men who are so strictly kept within bounds by good manners, respect, usage, gratitude and still more by mutual watchfulness, by jealousy *inter pares*, who, moreover, in their behaviour to one another show themselves so inventive in consideration, self-control, delicacy, loyalty, pride and friendship—those very men are to the outside world, to things foreign and to foreign countries, little better than so many uncaged beasts of prey. Here they enjoy liberty from all social restraint . . . they revert to the beast of prey's innocence of conscience, and become rejoicing monsters, who perhaps go on their way, after a hideous sequence of murder, conflagration, violation, torture, with as much gaiety and equanimity as if they had merely taken part in some student gambols . . . Deep in the nature of all these noble races there lurks unmistakably the beast of prey, the *blond beast*, lustfully roving in search of booty and victory. From time to time, the beast demands an outlet, an escape, a return to the wilderness. (*Genealogy of Morals*, i. 11.)

One cannot but conceive that the German Nietzschean of to-day must find this passage a little inconveniently



frank, and must wish that the master had not been quite so explicit on the subject of the 'blond beast'. As for the non-Nietzschean, who argues *a priori* that the German army cannot have been guilty of barbarous excesses, because it contains a large percentage of cultured and kindly men to whom brutality is odious, they must surely feel some slight uneasiness when it is pointed out that the popular philosopher of the day, the man whose works the cultured soldier carries in his knapsack, sets it down as a characteristic of the victorious and 'dominating' warrior that he should regard murder, violation and torture<sup>1</sup> as 'student gambols'. If it be said that such writing is not sane, and cannot be seriously accepted by sane men as a rule of conduct, I agree to the first proposition, but demur to the second. This philosophy of the aristocratic 'blond beast' is quite seriously regarded as an epoch-making revelation by men who (though I should be sorry to guarantee the quality of their intelligence) cannot be set down as positively insane.

Let us look, now, at some other characteristics of the aristocratic race, for whose sake the world exists—the soil from which the Superman is, in the fullness of time, to spring :

The essential point in a good and healthy aristocracy is that it shall *not* regard itself as a function (whether of the kingship or of the commonwealth), but as their *meaning* and highest justification—that it should therefore accept with a good conscience the sacrifice of untold numbers of men and women, who *for its sake*

<sup>1</sup> I do not imply belief in the worst crimes laid to the charge of the German soldiery. We know that hideous fables have been put about by heated imagination and mischievous mendacity. But there is not the least doubt that the principle of deliberate 'frightfulness' has, in the general treatment of Belgium and northern France, been carried to shocking extremes.



must be depressed and reduced to imperfect human beings, to slaves, to instruments. Its fundamental belief must be precisely that society ought *not* to exist for its own sake, but only as a basis and scaffolding on which a selected race of beings may be able to elevate themselves to their higher mission, and in general to a higher *existence*. (*Beyond Good and Evil*, § 258.)

The noble type of man feels *himself* to be the determiner of values; he looks for no approval from others, but takes his stand on the judgement, 'What is hurtful to me is hurtful in itself'; he knows it to be his prerogative to confer honour on things, to be a *creator of values*. . . . A ruling-class morality is, however, particularly strange and disagreeable to the prevailing taste of the day, by reason of the sternness of its principle that one has duties only to one's equals: that one may act towards beings of a lower order, and towards everything that is foreign, just as seems good to one . . . and in any case 'beyond good and evil'. (*Beyond Good and Evil*, § 260.)

If we did not know that this was written more than a quarter of a century ago, might we not suppose it a fresh-coined paradox, designed to justify retrospectively the Prussian policy of 1914? The great German state 'has duties only to its equals'; but as it has no equals, it follows that it has no duties. Especially to Belgium, a 'foreign' state 'of a lower order', it is more than justified in behaving with a total disregard of moral prejudices. If the philosophical education of that hapless little country had not been neglected, she would have bethought her of the following 'principle', and let Germany trample over her unopposed:

At risk of wounding innocent ears, I lay down the principle that egoism is of the essence of the noble soul, I mean the immovable belief that to a being such as 'we are' other beings are by nature subject,

and are bound to sacrifice themselves. (*Beyond Good and Evil*, § 265.)

Belgium ought to have felt honoured by the opportunity of effacing herself at the command of the 'noble' German egoism; but, alas! her pitiful 'slave morality' prompted her to die rather than renounce her rights and obligations at the nod of the 'blond beast, lustfully roving in search of booty and victory'. In another place Nietzsche provides us with a still more striking image for the German spirit of domination. If Belgium had only kept the following pretty little fable before her eyes, she might have been more amenable to reason:

That the lambs should bear a grudge against the great birds of prey, is in no way surprising; but that is no reason why we should blame the great birds of prey for picking up the little lambs. And if the lambs say among themselves, 'These birds of prey are evil; and whoso is as unlike as possible to a bird of prey, and as like as possible to its opposite, a lamb, shall we not call him good?' one can have no objection to the setting up of such an ideal, except that the birds of prey are likely to regard it rather mockingly, and say 'We bear no grudge against these good lambs; on the contrary, we love them—for nothing is more to our taste than a tender lamb'. To demand of strength that it should *not* manifest itself as strength, that it should *not* be a will for overcoming, for overthrowing, for mastery, a thirst for enemies and struggles and triumphs, is as absurd as to demand of weakness that it should manifest itself as strength. (*Genealogy of Morals*, i. 13.)

If Nietzsche were now alive, would he, I wonder, have sufficient detachment of spirit to realize that recent events have falsified his last illustration, and shown that there is nothing absurd in the idea of weakness manifesting itself as strength? What else has Belgium done? Her weakness has been transmuted into strength by the

power of a heroic spirit and an intense indignation. By any standard not purely material and mechanical, it is Belgium, not Germany, that is to-day the 'noble', the 'aristocrat', the 'creator of values'.

As for general exhortations to war and denunciations of the spirit of pity, of humanity, of gentleness, of justice, it is difficult to select from their abundance. Here is a prophecy the fulfilment of which Germany is obediently endeavouring to bring about, though we trust she may be ultimately baffled :

We owe it to Napoleon . . . that several warlike centuries, unexampled in history, are now likely to follow one another, in short, that we have entered upon *the classical age of war*, of scientific and yet popular war on the grandest scale . . . to which all coming millenniums will look back with envy and reverence, as to an ideal realized. (*The Joyful Wisdom*, § 362.)

The same ideas inspire the following passage, which contains the most famous, and, indeed, the finest, of all Nietzsche's maxims :

I rejoice in all signs that a more manly, more warlike age is beginning, which will, before all things, bring bravery once more into repute ! For it must prepare the way for a still loftier age, and store up the forces necessary to it—that age which shall carry heroism into the domain of knowledge, and *wage wars* on behalf of ideas and their consequences . . . Believe me ! the secret of extracting the greatest profit and enjoyment from existence is this : *live dangerously* ! Build your cities on Vesuvius ! Launch your ships on uncharted seas ! Live at war with your equals and with yourselves ! Be robbers and conquerors, ye enlightened ones, so long as ye cannot be rulers and possessors. (*The Joyful Wisdom*, § 283.)

Apart from its context, the exhortation to 'live dangerously' sounds generous and noble. It is indeed the

finer sort of men who love 'the bright face of danger', and choose for themselves the tasks, duties and adventures from which those of softer fibre shrink. Life is full of opportunities for this type of man to enjoy the exhilaration of peril, either in the service of others, or at all events under conditions which involve neither tyranny nor cruelty. But how the splendour of the saying fades when we find that it is not the danger of the lifeboat-man, the explorer, the mountaineer that Nietzsche has in mind, but the danger of the bully and the bravo! It is not by preserving others from danger, but by inflicting it on them (of course with injustice, rapine, and cruelty in its train) that the adept of this gospel is to 'extract the greatest profit and enjoyment from existence'.

The reader may possibly feel that such passages cannot have been intended to be read literally—that they must be taken as figurative utterances, having reference to some spiritual plane of existence on which robbery and conquest, rapine and cruelty, mean something very different from what they mean on the common earth. It is true that Nietzsche mixes up the literal and the figurative in the most reckless way. In many of his most characteristic outpourings he himself would probably have been at a loss to tell whether he meant what he said, or something quite different. It is unfortunate that, during his lifetime, criticism simply ignored his writings, and no attempt was made to cross-examine him, to pin him down to definite meanings, to confront him with the consequences of his doctrines, if read in their plain and obvious sense. He enjoyed the irresponsibility conferred by neglect; and this is precisely what renders his 'aphorisms' so dangerous. Literally interpreted, they would lead straight back to chaos; even his most ardent disciples must, at many points, read



him in a figurative sense ; but they are perfectly free to take his words literally whenever it suits them—as Germany is doing at the present moment.

Such an ambiguity encounters us in the following famous passage :

My brethren in war ! I love you from my heart's heart. . . . Therefore let me tell you the truth !

I know the hate and envy of your heart. Ye are not great enough not to know hate and envy. Then be great enough not to be ashamed of them.

Ye shall be of those whose eye is ever seeking an enemy—*your* enemy. And some of you know hatred at first sight.

Ye shall seek your enemy, ye shall wage your war, and wage it for your thoughts. And, if your thought be overthrown, your honesty shall none the less shout Victory !

Ye shall love peace as a means to new wars. And the short peace better than the long.

I do not counsel you to work, but to fight. I do not counsel you to peace, but to conquest. Let your work be a battle, your peace a victory.

Ye say, a good cause will hallow even war ? I say unto you ! it is the good war that halloweth every cause. (*Zarathustra* : 'Of War and Warriors'.)

One of these verses (the fourth) may at a pinch be read as referring to intellectual rather than physical conflicts. It must be in a war of ideas, not in a struggle for material advantage, that the vanquished is adjured to shout 'Victory !'—that is, to admit that truth has triumphed though he himself be overthrown.<sup>1</sup> But though this

<sup>1</sup> It may be said that this interpretation is inconsistent with Nietzsche's general attitude towards the concept 'truth'. But in what other sense are we to read the passage ? Thought can only be overthrown by more valid thought ; and is not validity the Nietzschean test of truth ?



verse is, strictly speaking, irreconcilable with the idea of strife in its literal, physical sense, the whole passage has always been, and cannot but be, interpreted as a eulogy of war precisely as it is waged by the Prussian General Staff.

The ambiguity, nay contradiction, in the terms of this passage is only an example of Nietzsche's intellectual unscrupulousness. He did not take the pains to think his thoughts out, to carry them forward to their consequences, to assure himself of their real meaning and implication. So long as they were sufficiently violent and inhuman, he flung them forth recklessly, with no care for the consequences. Why, indeed, should we look for any intellectual conscience in a man who held evil to be 'just as expedient, race-conserving, and indispensable' as good ?

Before concluding this section, let me cite one or two miscellaneous passages about which there is no ambiguity whatever. The page containing the following text must doubtless have been well thumbed by those apostles of culture in Belgium who carried *Zarathustra* in their knapsacks :

I warn you against pity : from it will one day arise a heavy cloud for men. Verily, I am weatherwise !

But take heed also to this saying : All great love is still above its pity : for it desires to create the object of its love.

'Myself I sacrifice to my love, and my neighbour as myself'—so runs the speech of all creators.

For all creators are hard.

(*Zarathustra*, 'Of the Pitiful'.)

Germany was seeking to create a new, a German, Belgium ; and 'all creators are hard'. Should she succeed, however, the enslaved Belgians need not fear inter-

ference with their cherished Catholicism ; for thus saith the Nietzschean evangel :

For the strong and independent, prepared and predestined to command, in whom the judgement and skill of a ruling race is incarnated, religion is one more means of overcoming resistance to the exercise of authority : it is a common bond between the rulers and the ruled, betraying and surrendering to the former the conscience of the latter, the secrets of their inmost heart, which would prompt them to renounce obedience. (*Beyond Good and Evil*, § 61.)

Here, again, is an aphorism which Germany has taken quite literally, and has resolutely put in practice :

We need a transvaluation of values, under the new pressure and impact of which conscience shall be steeled and the heart transmuted to bronze, so as to bear the weight of such a responsibility. (*Beyond Good and Evil*, § 203.)

Finally, that our suffragist friends may be in no doubt as to what awaits them, if the spirit of Nietzsche wins in this war, let me remind them of the following oft-quoted texts :

Man shall be trained for war, and woman for the solace of the warrior. Everything else is folly.

Thou goest to women ? Forget not thy whip.  
(*Zarathustra* : ' Of Old and Young Womankind '.)

### III

I submit that, when a body of doctrine is known to have countless adherents in the country of its origin, and when the political and military conduct of the country is found to be in every detail exactly consonant with that doctrine, we cannot possibly resist the

clusion that it is one of the factors which render such conduct possible. In this case, as I have already suggested, it is a symptom as well as a cause. Nietzsche certainly did not beget the German frame of mind. But what can be more evident than that he has fomented and stimulated it, providing it with a philosophic background, and bringing Prussian Junkerdom into line with a congenially swaggering theory of the universe? He has hitched Mark Brandenburg to the stars in their courses.

What then are we to say of this philosophy? Is it a sane, a wholesome, a tenable theory of life? Is it desirable that the world of the future should be shaped in accordance with its dictates?

Let us first note that it is, above everything, a temperament-philosophy, a transcript of character. Henrik Ibsen, in a well-known epigram, has said, 'To poetize (*dichten*) is to hold judgement-day upon oneself.' Nietzsche, on the other hand, might have said 'To philosophize is to effect one's own apotheosis.' He admits as much, in more than one passage, saying, for example, 'the greater part of the conscious thinking of a philosopher is secretly influenced by his instincts'.

Now the determining factor in Nietzsche's mental habit is certainly to be found in his persistent ill health. From early manhood onward, he was a chronic sufferer, with only occasional intervals of tolerable bodily comfort. A doctor, seeking to prove that the root of his malady was neglected eye-strain, has drawn up, from his correspondence and other sources, an appalling catalogue of his illnesses. One of his most frequent afflictions was violent headache with vomiting, which used often to last for many days on end. Those of us who are at all subject to sick headache know that a few hours of it are sufficient

to bring us to the verge of suicide, and that two or three recurrences of it in a year are a serious trial to an otherwise healthy man. There were long periods in Nietzsche's life when his days of anguish seem to have outnumbered his days of comparative ease. It is to me incredible that these persistent headaches were not premonitions of his ultimate insanity.<sup>1</sup> His father died insane; and though an attempt is made to attribute his breakdown entirely to some accidental lesion, the coincidence is, to say the least of it, curious.<sup>1</sup> But, putting aside the question of mental disease, we are certainly entitled to say that a man who was such a martyr to physical disease in the region of the brain was unlikely to take a very normal and healthy view of life. His mental attitude could not but be in some measure warped.

And warped it was, in a curious but quite comprehensible way. Nietzsche, like Robert Louis Stevenson—an almost exact contemporary who probably never heard of him—was driven by reaction against his bodily frailties into an imaginary attitude of aggressive robustness, of overpowering health, of ostentatious virility. Both men were in reality very brave, very stoical; and as Nietzsche's maladies seem to have been more painful, more depressing, than Stevenson's, his is perhaps the greater merit. But in both men the effort to react against what Cassius calls 'accidental evils' led to a certain loss of equilibrium, an over-emphasis of fortitude. In Stevenson's case the lack of balance was very slight, and tended to disappear as time went on. It is only in

<sup>1</sup> In August 1887, two years before his final breakdown, Nietzsche himself said to his friend Deussen: 'I am now at about the age at which my father died, and I feel that I shall succumb to the same trouble (*Leiden*).'

his early years that we find him a little shrill in his praises of the world as a ' brave gymnasium ', full of matchless opportunities for ' sea-bathing, and horse-riding, and bracing manly virtue '. It was only to such innocent exaggerations that his wholesome and kindly spirit was at any time prone. But in Nietzsche's congenitally irritable, arrogant, atrabilious nature, the effort ' to keep a stiff upper lip ' led to far other and uglier excesses. The supersensitive, quivering little invalid, who could never even find a woman willing to marry him, constructed for himself an ideal entity, physically his opposite, spiritually his counterpart—the great ' blond beast ', the human bird of prey, the conqueror, the destroyer, the slave-driver, the despiser of ' herd morality '. And to the stridulous persistence with which he preached this ideal, there can be little doubt that his countrymen's stolid neglect of his writings contributed. They fell still-born from the press, until at last he had to break in upon his own scanty capital in order to pay for the printing of them. Tragic indeed is the tale of his struggle against chilling indifference—it might well have embittered an originally sweeter nature. The enthusiastic friendships of his youth cooled and flickered out. In the end Zarathustra had but one faithful disciple, though his last years of sanity were brightened by recognition from Taine in France and George Brandes in Denmark. There have been few unhappier men than this lonely, unappreciated, jaundiced genius, wandering from third-rate pension to pension, in search of a little sunshine and health. But his pride forbade him to give in and ' say Nay ' to life. He felt that an invalid had no right to be a pessimist.

Under the bludgeonings of chance,  
His head was bloody, but unbowed.



He took revenge on the world as he knew it by constructing one in which all the impulses, baulked in his own nature, should have free and unbridled course. One cannot read him without feeling that he was not so unhappy after all, since, in penning his ruthless paragraphs, he enjoyed ecstasies of that wild-beast-like destructiveness which was an essential part of his ideal.

Docked of its wantonness and virulence of expression, his philosophy is at many points acceptable enough. The Will to Power does not perceptibly differ from the Will to Live, or, if it does, it differs for the worse, as being a less universal concept. No one doubts the relativity of ethical standards, or the need of a transvaluation of many of our values; though Nietzsche himself would surely have admitted fortitude to be a tolerably permanent virtue, while it is hard to imagine a transvaluation which should make temperance (for example) a vice. The Superman, reasonably interpreted, becomes an innocent eugenic ideal. What Nietzsche actually meant by him will for ever remain doubtful. Sometimes he writes of him as an individual—as though all the groaning and travail of creation had no end save the production of a single super-Napoleon. At other times (more sanely) he uses Superman as a collective term for a breed or caste, a highly-developed variety of the genus 'blond beast', which, as he shrewdly conjectures, will very much resemble what the common man of to-day would describe as a legion of devils. But in this diabolism there is a touch of grim humour, a half-confessed mischievousness, and desire to 'épater le bourgeois'. So far as his practical recipes for the production of the Superman go, they are little more than eugenic common-places.

The really noxious feature of Nietzsche's philosophy—

apart from its general inhumanity of temper—is the division of mankind into masters and slaves, and the assertion that this is a desirable arrangement, conducive to the perfecting of the race. There may be some historical truth (along with much exaggeration) in the assignment of certain moral concepts to ‘master morality’ and ‘slave morality’ respectively. Over this contribution to the ‘genealogy of morals’ it is needless to quarrel. But to make the enslavement of the mass of humanity the fundamental requisite for an ideal (and apparently rigid, static, undeveloping) social state, was to supply aristocratic, plutocratic, and especially military arrogance with a pseudo-philosophic catchword that lends itself to the most hideous abuse. Very naturally, it is this ‘stupendous addition to human knowledge’ (as an English disciple calls it) upon which all the little Nietzsches of his following, who cultivate his insolence without a trace of his talent, fasten with parrot-cries of delight. They may not be exactly Supermen, for the production of that glorious race is to be a matter of time ; but they can here and now rank themselves on the side of the masters, and condemn the herd. It needs no profound acquaintance with the literature inspired by Nietzsche to realize that he has at least succeeded in begetting a flourishing brood of super-snobs. Nor is it doubtful that these energumens abound in the high places of Pan-Germanism, military, political, and journalistic. Does not Nietzsche speak in every line of the following effusion by Herr K. F. Wolff, in *Alldeutsche Blätter* for September last ? <sup>1</sup>

There are two kinds of races, master races and inferior races. Political rights belong to the master race alone, and can only be won by war. This is a

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Mr. C. R. L. Fletcher in *Oxford Pamphlets*.

scientific law, a law of biology. . . . It is *unjust* that a rapidly-increasing master race should be struggling for room behind its own frontier, while a declining, inferior race can stretch its limbs at ease on the other side of that frontier. The inferior race will not be educated in the schools of the master race, nor will any school be established for it, nor will its language be employed in public. Should it rebel, it is necessary to use the most violent means to crush such insurrection, and not to encumber the prisons afterward. Thus the conquerors can best work for the annihilation of the conquered, and break for ever with the prejudice which would claim for a beaten race any right to maintain its nationality or its native tongue.

Here, we see, an easy but very significant transition has been effected. Nietzsche knew nothing of any master nation existing in the world to-day. His doctrine was that within all nations there was (or ought to be) a master aristocracy, and a 'herd' living in more or less disguised slavery. But Herr Wolff gaily transfers the 'master' quality from individuals to a whole nation—the Germans—and the slave quality to a whole nation, manifestly the French, who have no right to 'stretch their limbs at ease on the other side of their frontier.' This is, of course, a misreading of Nietzsche, but it is a misreading to which he lends himself only too readily; and there is every reason to believe that it is a misreading very widely accepted in Germany.

That Nietzsche was a man of genius there is no doubt. He had flashes of amazing lucidity. He had a disintegrating intellect of such abnormal power that at last it disintegrated itself. To his mastery of language German testimony is unanimous, though an English reader is apt to find more than a touch of the falsetto in his constant underscorings and points of exclamation. But

one gift he never possessed—a gift most essential to the man who aspires to shape the spiritual life of the future—the gift of sanity. It is for specialists to determine at what stage of his career definite mental disease set in ; for us it is enough to note that at no time after 1870 can he be said to have possessed either a sound body or a sound mind. His attitude to life is thoroughly morbid, his reading of its laws essentially mad ; and his mad philosophy was at once an effect and a very potent cause of that German madness which is convulsing the world.

What a calamity that this national aberration should have found a man of sympathetically aberrant genius to interpret and intensify it ! In a very real sense, it is the philosophy of Nietzsche that we are fighting.





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